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WELLINGTON MEMORIAL

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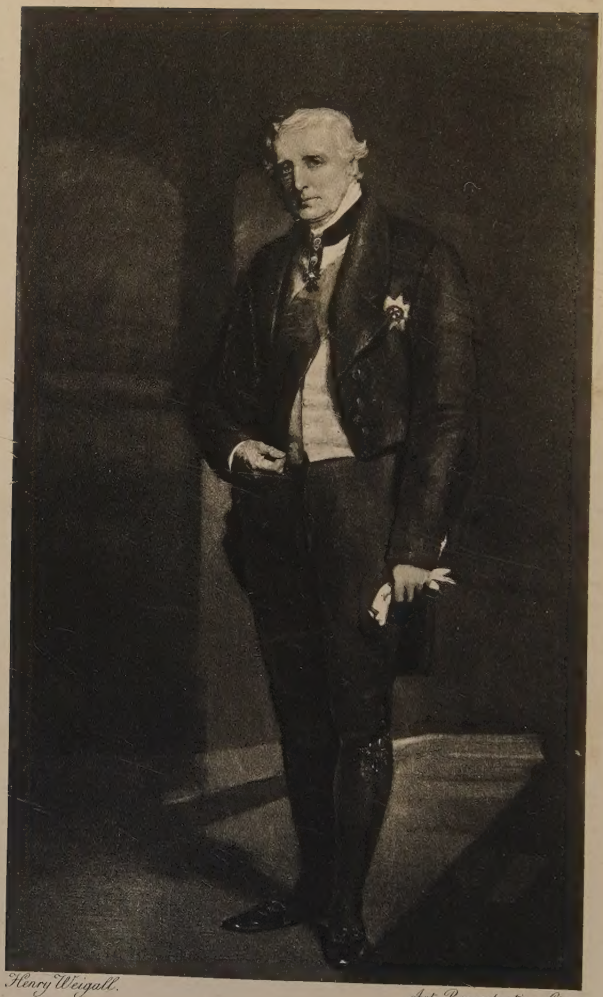

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Duke of Wellington.

THE WELLINGTON MEMORIAL

WELLINGTON

HIS COMRADES AND CONTEMPORARIES

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BY

MAJOR ARTHUR GRIFFITHS

AUTHOR OF "THE ENGLISH ARMY," "FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY GENERALS," "THE QUEEN'S SHILLING," "THE ROME EXPRESS," ETC. ETC.

With Numerous Illustrations

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Dedicated

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to

His Grace

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

Preface

It has been said, and with justice, that although numberless works, historical, biographical, and anecdotic, have dealt with the great Duke of Wellington, his true life has yet to be written. I make no pretence in these pages to fill the gap; I offer them only as a small contribution to a fuller and more just estimate of one of the greatest captains, the most honest and loyal citizens and statesmen, that have served this country. It is not too much to advance, here, that for some years past the Duke's reputation has been under partial eclipse. The least admirable traits in his character have been unduly emphasised; we are told he was harsh, unsympathetic, ungrateful; without strong affection, whether as a son or a father; taking all to his own credit, passing on little praise and fame to those who chiefly helped him to his great successes.

I have now essayed, anxiously if imperfectly, to combat this narrow and most unfair view; to give, as I believe, a more faithful picture of the man, based upon his achievements. I have set them forward, so far as I was competent, on broad lines, and in no more detail than was essential to illustrate his brilliant career; I have endeavoured to show him as he was, a host in himself, courageous, self-reliant, sanguine and tenacious in the darkest hour, undismayed by any odds, however great, rising superior to and overcoming every difficulty. His fine generalship, strategic and tactical, his consummate mastery of administrative business, his indefatigable labours, his inexhaustible patience, so sharply contrasted with unerring promptitude when the time for action came, have been treated briefly, but, I hope, with due appreciation. We shall see him bearing his almost crushing burthen alone, with little or no backing from home, hampered often by incompetent agents and the questionable support of feeble allies; see him building up and gradually perfecting, by his own unstinting effort, the military machine that was wanting in so much, both in the *personnel* and the *matériel*, keeping a firm hand on the wild spirits who too often showed more courage

than discipline, guiding and forming his officers by precept and example into skilled and trusty lieutenants.

It is fitting that the best pupils of his school should also find place in this memorial to his great worth; and I have taken due account of some of his chief supporters—of such excellent soldiers as Hill, Beresford, Picton, Cotton, Pakenham, Cole, and many more; men who won well-deserved renown under his orders, and, later, often gained fresh laurels on various distant fields.

I have devoted principal attention to Wellington in his military aspect, as the most remarkable, and most within my own competence to deal with; but I have not overlooked his great political services. I have wished also to present a general view of his personal character, to exhibit his individual traits and qualities, and describe them with sufficient minuteness to show up into strong relief his unfailing sense of duty, his uprightness, his directness of purpose, his clear and abiding commonsense. This is an age of revivals, and I venture to claim for this memorial, that it is a new move towards strengthening, indeed rehabilitating, Wellington in the esteem of his fellow-countrymen.

I must here gratefully acknowledge the ample facilities for the reproduction of pictures in Apsley House so kindly afforded by his Grace the Duke of Wellington, and his generous sympathy with this small tribute to the memory of his illustrious grandfather.

ARTHUR GRIFFITHS.

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THE WELLINGTON MEMORIAL

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

Birth—Childhood—School—Enters army—Youthful zeal—Rapid promotion—First campaign: Flanders—Commands the rear-guard—Returns home and seeks civil employment.

ARTHUR WELLESLEY was the fourth son of Garret, Earl of Mornington, and Anne Hill, a daughter of Lord Dungannon. He came of a good old English stock settled in Ireland, and he is said to have been born in Dublin, or at Dangan Castle, County Meath, about May 1769. Thackeray, in his Ballads, makes the great Duke refer retrospectively to his parentage—

> "His father praps he sees,
> Most musicle of Lords,
> A playing maddrigles and glees
> Upon the Arpsicords.

Jest phansy this old Ero
Upon his mother's knee!
Did ever lady in this land
Ave greater sons than she?"

Arthur owed much to both his parents. He inherited his father's fine musical taste and his mother's strength of character. A water-colour portrait of Lady Mornington still extant shows that he resembled her in feature—no compliment, perhaps, to her. He was "her ugly boy Arthur;" her other children were remarkable for their good looks, and the eldest, afterwards Marquis of Wellesley, was one of the handsomest men of his time.

No very authentic facts are preserved of Wellington's childhood. He was at school in Chelsea, then at Eton, afterwards in Brussels, and finally for a year at the academy of a M. Pignerol at Angers. At Eton he fought his first battle with "Bobus" Smith, Sidney Smith's brother, with what success we do not know. In Brussels he began the study of French, and at Angers he was grounded in the military art; Pignerol taught everything, and his was not, as has been said, exclusively a military school. A schoolfellow has preserved the fact that Arthur was not very attentive to his studies; he preferred to play with his terrier dog "Vick" and accept social civilities from the neighbouring gentry.

Undoubtedly Wellington taught himself more than he ever learnt from his tutors. It is the only explanation of that marvellous breadth of knowledge he displayed when called, quite early in life, to deal with great affairs. We have it from his own lips, moreover,[1] that before he went to India he had made it his invariable rule to read for several hours daily, and that he never gave up the practice. His rare powers, his quick appreciation and strongly retentive memory, soon stored his mind. Like other great soldiers, he had laid to heart early the lessons contained in the works of military writers, had digested their plans of campaigns, the movements and operations of famous generals, and thus acquired clear ideas of conduct, fostering the faculty of command, the power to control complicated situations and solve difficulties in the field with promptitude and propriety.

The Duke never looked back with pleasure on his early days; he never talked of them, save by accident or against his will. He was no favourite with his mother; on the contrary, it is asserted that her feeling for him was "not far removed from aversion." In after life he exhibited no warmth of affection for her, and thus repaid her early neglect. She is said to have called him the "fool of the

[1] Colonel Shaw Kennedy.

family," "fit food for powder" and nothing more; to have had but a small opinion of him until compelled to be proud of his great deeds. His best friend was his brother Richard (Marquis Wellesley), who helped him to his first commission, secured him quick promotion, and furnished the necessary purchase-money.

Arthur Wellesley was gazetted ensign in the 41st Regiment on the 7th March 1787, and joined in Dublin. We have a glimpse of him there in one or two apocryphal stories. A lady would not accept an invitation to a picnic until she had stipulated that "that mischievous boy Arthur Wellesley should not be of the party." It is to this period, no doubt, we may attribute the legend that he was concerned in a street brawl and came into collision with the Dublin "Charleys." He was clearly not a ladies' man—at no pains to please them. Lady Aldborough was fond of confessing that she thought him a gawky youth, and but poor company; for she took him with her to some entertainment and left him planted there, to find his way home as best he could, which he did by accepting a lift from the musicians. "I never thought," she afterwards told the great Duke laughingly, "when I left you to travel with the fiddlers, that you would come to play first fiddle yourself." He was actually a violinist,

and a good one, but he gave up the instrument quite early in life. It says much for the stern bent of Wellington's mind that he ceased playing because he felt that it was too engrossing and would distract him from the more serious business of life. About the same time he resolved never again to touch a card. He had been a gambler, and had once lost so heavily in Dublin that he became greatly embarrassed. His steadiness and self-respect were strongly marked in those early days. In an age when hard drinking was deemed an amiable feeling he was singularly abstemious. He never smoked but once, when the Prince Regent gave him a cigar, which he failed to conquer.

The lad was a good soldier from the day he joined. The gaieties of Dublin, the frolics of the Viceregal Court when appointed A.D.C. to the Lord Lieutenant, his parliamentary duties as M.P. for Trim in the Irish House of Commons—none of these could turn him from his military work. He was entirely devoted to his profession. There is a famous story of him that, as an ensign, he caused a private soldier to be weighed with and without his accoutrements, so as to "compare the weight he carried and the work he had to do." He was heard to excuse this curious instance of youthful zeal by urging that he could not

family," "fit food for powder" and nothing more; to have had but a small opinion of him until compelled to be proud of his great deeds. His best friend was his brother Richard (Marquis Wellesley), who helped him to his first commission, secured him quick promotion, and furnished the necessary purchase-money.

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begin too soon to understand something of his business.

No doubt he had every encouragement to learn his work, the best incentive of all, that of immediate reward. His advancement was extraordinarily rapid, even for a "sprig of the aristocracy," as he sometimes called himself, and in days when commissions were given to babes in arms of both sexes. He became a lieutenant in the first month of his service; a captain in the 12th Lancers in June 1791, after four years; a major in the 33rd foot in April 1793, and lieutenant-colonel commanding in September the same year. The last step was by purchase, with money found by his brother. It is pleasant to record the close bond of affection that existed between them, as shown by the eagerness of Arthur to repay the loan directly Indian prize-money gave him a substantial bank balance, and no less by Richard's refusal to accept it. It is a trait of nobility and straight dealing that does credit to both characters. But the Wellesleys, and these two especially, were far above any sordid, mercenary ideas; Arthur was liberal to a fault, his purse-strings ever open, as will be presently shown, to his friends and to all who established a claim on his generosity.

Six years from ensign to lieutenant-colonel is

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Lt Col. The. Hon.ble Arthur Wellesley.

no bad record, even in times when influence, social and political, counted for so much in every public career. The system which is supposed to be now obsolete has been defended on the ground that it gave us young leaders—men in their prime and at their very best. The cases of Wellington and some of his more conspicuous comrades are quoted in proof of its usefulness. It cannot be denied that, but for their rapid advancement, the country would not have been served by such men as Beresford, Hope, Cole, Colville, Pakenham, Cotton, Slade, and Gomm. Marshal Beresford was only nine years in gaining the rank of lieutenant-colonel; and he was a major-general at thirty-six. Sir John Hope, who began late for those times, was also but nine years in obtaining the command of a regiment, and did so at the age of twenty-eight. Sir Lowry Cole was a lieutenant-colonel at twenty-two, after seven years' service; Sir Edward Pakenham (Wellington's brother-in-law) was a major at seventeen, and in one year more a lieutenant-colonel; Sir Charles Colville was given his first commission at eleven, he joined at sixteen, and was a captain at one-and-twenty; Sir Stapleton Cotton was a second lieutenant at seventeen, a captain of cavalry at twenty, and in command of a newly raised regiment of Dragoons as lieutenant-colonel in the following

year. All these were scions of noble families or of men with large landed estates. The converse has, however, been rather ignored, and a discreet veil has been drawn over the failures for which some of these favourites of fortune became responsible.

Wellington, although he so largely benefited by the system in vogue, declared it "certainly desirable that the only claim to promotion should be military merit; but this," he goes on to say, "is a degree of perfection to which the disposal of military patronage has never, and cannot be, I believe, brought in any military establishment." This difficulty, indeed, led him to question whether there could be any influence in aid of military merit "so legitimate as that of family connection, fortune, and influence in the country." He put military merit first, but where claims were nicely balanced he would allow interest to weigh down the scale. But no such arguments can well be applied in favour of the advancement of "curled darlings" who have not been tried. The advantages, as seen in the rare development of great genius, a mere chance after all, are more than counterbalanced by the possible mischief of calling the unknown prematurely to high place, and the positive heartburning it entails.

Wellington has been heard to say that his real

life began in India. But the butterfly stage of his existence, if he ever passed through one, must have ended when he obtained command of the 33rd. From that time forward he was wrapped in his profession, indefatigable in his efforts to become expert, and a master of all its details. As a regimental commanding officer he soon won golden opinions. A few years later Lord Harris reported on the 33rd as a model regiment; "for equipment, for courage, for discipline, for good conduct, it is above all praise." It no doubt owed this mainly to its lieutenant-colonel, who was as assiduous in promoting its efficiency as in perfecting his own knowledge and tactical skill. Wellesley was undoubtedly a "first-rate drill," as the phrase goes; that he had thoroughly learnt how to handle not only an infantry battalion, but larger bodies of all arms, is shown by the consummate skill he displayed on many great occasions. He gained distinction in this way during his very first campaign, which he made with the Duke of York in Flanders in 1794. At the affair of Boxtel, by a prompt deployment he stayed the victorious advance of the French, and later this lieutenant-colonel of twenty-five was entrusted with the command of the rear-guard, the responsible duty of covering an army in retreat. Many who noticed his skill in

this most arduous manœuvre predicted his future success as a leader of men. He must have imbibed many useful lessons in that disastrous campaign. He saw the vices of our military system, the evils of divided command, the incompetence of a royal general, the blunders caused by the fussy interference of an Aulic council at home. "It was a marvel how any of us escaped," was his commentary on that series of contemptible military mistakes.

After Flanders Wellington was nearly lost to the army. Straitened means, debts contracted in Dublin,[1] "circumstances, necessities," as he himself described them, induced him to seek civil employment, "some post in the Revenue or under the Treasury, something more lucrative, in short, than the command of a regiment." "He did so with reluctance. It was departing from a line he preferred," but he was driven to it by the seeming hopelessness and narrowness of his military prospects. Yet within a couple of years the wheel of fortune lifted him into a position of splendid opportunity. The 33rd went to India, he followed it, to arrive almost simultaneously with his brother, Lord Mornington. One Wellesley was but a simple colonel of a regiment, the other was Governor-General.

[1] No doubt the losses at play already mentioned.

CHAPTER II

INDIA

Becomes the trusted counsellor of Governor-General—His Indian despatches—First proofs of great capacity—Both general and administrator—Master of detail—"Rice and bullocks mean men"—Large ideas as a leader—Seringapatam: his first and only failure—Governs Mysore—Egypt: superseded by Baird—Mahratta war—Assaye—Returns to England—K.C.B., but otherwise unappreciated—Dry-nursed by the Horse Guards.

INDIA was no doubt the turning-point in Arthur Wellesley's life, the start and basis of his great career. It was his first chance of showing what was in him; we see now how the habit of quiet, close observation to which he was constantly addicted bore fruit, and how, when called upon to use his reasoning powers, he could rely upon a strong intellect fortified by study and previous thought. Almost at once, although but twenty-eight, he was called upon to consider matters the most varied and momentous. He became the confidant and trusted counsellor of men who wielded the highest authority and were weighted with the heaviest responsibilities, the most burthensome and anxious cares. His brother the Governor-General, the

Governor of Madras, the military commander-in-chief, officials high and low, referred their difficulties to Wellesley, and gladly took his advice. He had a rare faculty of going to the very heart of things. The papers and minutes he drew up on subjects the most diverse and intricate contained sound, sagacious opinions, couched in clear language, based upon wide, deep knowledge, and brimful of common-sense. His correspondence at that early period, on the very threshold of his career, is perhaps the most interesting part of all his voluminous despatches. Nearly forty years afterwards, when in the fulness of his fame, he spoke of them with pardonable pride. "I have just been reading over my Indian despatches," he told Lady Salisbury in 1834, "and I am surprised to find them so good. They are as good as I should write now. They show the same attention to details—to the pursuit of all the means, however small, that could promote success . . . the energy and activity are as great then as ever afterwards."

There is nothing exaggerated really in this self-complacent estimate of his early work. Any one who examines these papers must be struck with their power; the grasp, the breadth of knowledge, the patient attention to minute details, the high tone, the unerring insight into men and things that

fill them. We have here the first evidences of that high sense of duty that always actuated him; the high standard of character he expected from his officers. This is the same man who wrote, some ten years later, in Portugal, when oppressed by many trials: "I come here to perform my duty; and I neither do nor can enjoy any satisfaction in anything excepting the performance of my duty to my own country." First among his thoughts, too, was to maintain the reputation of an English gentleman. He will have no dealings with people "who have no faith, or no principle of honour or of honesty, or such as usually among us guide the conduct of gentlemen." Bribery was abhorrent to him, and he unhesitatingly declared that any offer of it was an insult to British officers and gentlemen. His own punctilious nicety is seen in his indignant disclaimer of all unworthy motives in levying a contribution upon the city of Burhampore in 1804. He defends the action, taking his stand on the practice common in India and in Europe; he declares "it would have been much more disgraceful and disastrous to have lost the campaign from the want of money than to have ensured in this manner the means of gaining it. . . . I believe I am as anxious as any other man that my character should not suffer—I do not mean in the mouths of

common reporters and scandal-bearers, but in the eyes of a fair-judging people." We find him a keen judge of character, possessing an almost intuitive penetration; he reckons men up quickly at their exact value. One is "an honest, zealous servant of the public, . . . but the most unaccommodating public officer I have ever met with." Another, "although an excellent man, has more of the oak than the willow in his disposition."

In public affairs, both civil and military, he exhibits the highest qualities of the administrator and the general. His views are broad and statesmanlike. His letter, for instance, addressed to Lord Clive in 1800, then Governor of Bombay, considering our attitude towards the Mahrattas, is a closely reasoned state paper of the highest value; that in 1803 to Colonel Close, the Secretary to Government, shows an intimate acquaintance with the hidden springs and secret working of some of the native states; a third, that to General Stuart in 1804, on the administration of newly acquired territories and the maintenance of a proper military establishment, exhibits profound knowledge and great prescience.

In military matters he is naturally at home, in all branches and in all respects. He can plan comprehensive operations, and yet attend to the most minute details of preparation; he is a master of

la grande guerre, yet fully experienced in minor tactics and regimental interior economy. His memorandum on the expedition to Egypt, drawn up for his own guidance when he believed he was to have the command, but unreservedly placed at the disposal of the general who had superseded him, is a clear résumé of the pros and cons, the difficulties that may be expected in crossing the desert from the Red Sea to the Nile, the reasonable hopes he entertains that they are not insurmountable. Another memorandum, on the proposed operations against the Mahrattas in 1801, is an admirable document. Wellesley prepared it believing that his experience of the theatre of the war, "the seasons, nature of the country, its roads, its produce, and its means of defence, will be of use." With this preamble he proceeds to compress an immense quantity of the most valuable information into a few pages; he gives the most minute details on every possible point, from the fighting qualities of the enemy, the depths of the rivers, the resources of the country, to directions for taking a fort by a *coup de main* and the defences of Mysore. In the campaign that preceded Assaye he had the clearest ideas of the object in view. "I shall attack Ahmednuggur . . . by the possession of which place I shall secure the communications with Poonah and

Bombay. . . . When I shall have finished that operation and crossed the Godavery, I shall then if possible bring the enemy to action."

It is well known that Wellington put the questions of commissariat and supply before all. As he told Rogers, "If I had rice and bullocks I had men, and if I had men I knew I could beat the enemy." The Indian despatches abound with proofs of his early appreciation of this. "Articles of provision are not to be trifled with or left to chance," he writes to the Governor of Ceylon, "and there is nothing more clear than that the subsistence of the troops must be certain upon the proposed service, or the service must be relinquished." He has his fears about Baird's desert march, "founded upon the danger that the troops will starve if they do not return immediately." Read his voluminous requisitions on the Governor of Bombay for the supply of his column in the Mahratta war; the specification of items one by one, 10,000 gallons of arrack, 90,000 lbs. of salt meat for the European troops, 600 garces of rice for the native, with precise instructions as to packing, in "casks and kegs, round baskets," and so forth; the exact calculation beforehand of quantities, of medical stores (in detail), military stores, of forage for the horses, of transport animals, draught and carriage bullocks, with

the cautious reminder that "every carriage bullock must have a saddle." Again, when actually in the heat of active operations: "I have written to all quarters for assistance in cattle, . . . inquired of Colonel Stevenson whether he can afford to share with me his supplies of rice." "The cavalry horses are in good order, but our great difficulty is to find grain for them; there is plenty in the country, but it is all hid in holes; . . . notwithstanding the price we pay, we get none that we do not dig up." To the Governor of Bombay: "The service cannot be carried on in this manner; the troops must have regular supplies of provisions at command, or misfortune and disgrace will be the result." We shall have much more in this strain when we see Wellington in a larger field.

That Wellington had made an earnest study of the military art is also plain from these early despatches. We continually come across interesting reflections, embodying many of the axioms and principles in war, and applying them to his own conditions. "How true it is that in all military operations time is everything!" "In all great actions there is risk." "If we begin by a long defensive war, and go looking after convoys which are scattered over the face of the earth, and do not attack briskly, we shall soon be in distress." . . .

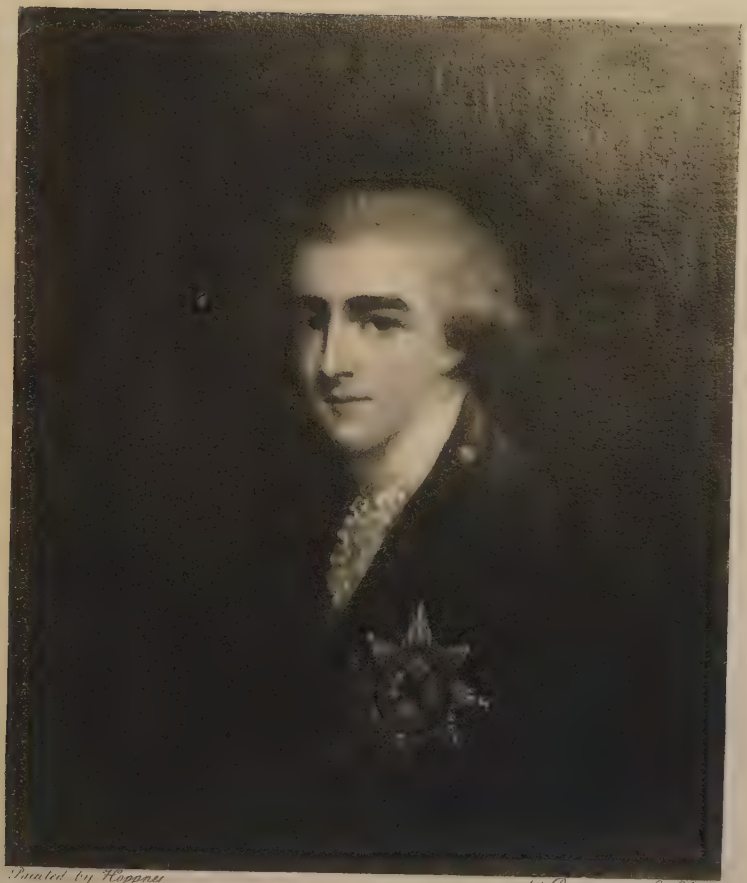
"I should break that detachment to pieces . . . should gain a powerful body of allies . . . and should have the whole game in my hands immediately." To Colonel Stevenson: "If you adopt this plan, and succeed in cutting up or driving to a distance one good party, the campaign will be our own. A long defensive war will ruin us, and will answer no purpose whatever." "I have served a good deal in this part of India, against this description of freebooter, and I think the best mode of operating is to press him with one or two corps capable of moving with tolerable celerity, and of such a strength as to render the result of an action by no means doubtful, if he should venture to risk one."

His intimate acquaintance with minor tactics, with the hundred and one details of daily routine in camp and quarters, his views and methods for the enforcement of discipline, show the born soldier with natural faculties developed and improved by thought, practice, and the exigencies of the service. His orders for the line of march, his instructions to the piquets and quarter-guards, his close supervision of all outpost duty, his stringent regulations for the preservation of order, and his management of courts-martial, bear witness to his strong masterful nature, his self-reliance, his powers of wielding authority. All this time his own character was

being strengthened. We get much insight into the young man's mind, the motives that guide him, the principles that support him, the rules of conduct he sets himself to follow. The general who planned the lines of Torres Vedras, and sprang them as a complete surprise both upon his own army and an over-exultant enemy, practised the same cautious reserve very early in life. "I wish to keep in my own breast the period at which hostilities should be commenced," he writes to Colonel Close in 1803. Again, in 1804, to Colonel Wallace: "A point . . . to which I should wish to draw your attention . . . is the secrecy of your proceedings. There is nothing more certain, that of a hundred affairs ninety-nine might be posted up at the market cross without injury to the public interests; but the misfortune is, that where the public business is the subject of general conversation, and is not kept secret as a matter of course, upon every occasion, it is very difficult to keep it secret on that occasion on which it is necessary. . . . It may be depended upon that whenever the public business ought to be kept secret, it always suffers when it is exposed to public view. For this reason secrecy is always best, and those who have been long trusted with the conduct of public affairs are in the habit of never making known public

business. . . . The consequence is that secrecy becomes natural to them. . . . Remember that what I recommend to you is far removed from mystery; in fact I recommend silence upon the public business on all occasions, in order to avoid the necessity for mystery upon any."

The young leader in these days of his upward progress was just as strong in action as in the closet. He went to India at perhaps the most critical stage in the growth of our Eastern empire, when our possessions were limited to strips of territory upon the sea-coast, when the East India Company was overshadowed by great native powers, and when at least one of them, Tippoo Sahib, was an avowed ally of France. It was fortunate that our agents and representatives in India were equal to the strain put upon them in this crisis. A conflict with Tippoo was inevitable, and the policy of the Governor-General was now strengthened, if not inspired, by his young soldier-brother. Wellesley saw that it was necessary to split up the Mahratta Confederacy, detach the Nizam, and disband the French contingent. He was still desirous to avoid war, yet he prepared for it strenuously. It was at his urgent recommendation, and with his assistance, that an effective, well-equipped force of 30,000 men was assembled in



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Earl of Mornington, K. G

the Madras Presidency ready to try conclusions with Tippoo and move upon Seringapatam. It was Colonel Wellesley who organised it, for it happened that he was called by accident to the temporary command, and he so perfected this army as to hand it over to General Harris, a few months later, "one of the best disciplined forces that had ever taken the field in India."

General Harris put Wellesley, with the rank of brigadier, in command of the Nizam's contingent, with which he also associated the 33rd. In the operations that followed Wellesley commanded the left, in driving Tippoo from his position at Malavelly, and he took part in the first combined attack on Seringapatam. Here Wellesley met with his first and only military failure—the memory of which long lingered with him, and made him tender and forgiving to non-success. He was heard to say in after life that he would never have risen had he been denied a second chance. The causes of that failure were always well remembered, and avoided by him in after life; he never again attacked a position in the darkness of the night without having thoroughly reconnoitred his ground. Some writers have pretended that he owed the chance of rehabilitating himself to the kindly offices of Sir David Baird, whom, a few days later, he superseded in

accepting the governorship of the captured Seringapatam. This is supported by no positive evidence. As a matter of fact Wellesley succeeded at the same point, the very morning after his failure, but he took no part in the final assault beyond commanding the reserves in the trenches. Sir David Baird led the stormers; yet Wellesley was made governor of the fortress, a preference that caused much heartburning at the time. It was thought then that undue favouritism was shown to the Governor-General's brother, but the Duke long afterwards[1] maintained that he was really the most fitted person for the post. "I had commanded the Nizam's army during the campaign and given universal satisfaction. I was liked by the natives. . . ." Baird, on the other hand, "had strong prejudices against them, and he was peculiarly disqualified, from his manner, habits, and, it was supposed, his temper,[2] for the management of them." Notwithstanding this conflict of claims Baird and Wellesley were always on the best of terms, and the Duke said frankly afterwards, "I don't believe there is a man who rejoiced more sincerely in my ulterior successes."

Sir John Malcolm records how in 1832 he met

[1] Duke to Croker, January 24, 1831.

[2] During Baird's imprisonment by Tippoo Sahib, the news came home that the English captives were chained together two and two. "God help the lad that's tied to our Davie," was his mother's remark on hearing the news.

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Lady Mornington.

Baird for the first time, after long years, when Sir David admitted that "Times are changed. No one knows so well as you how severely I felt the preference given on several occasions to your friend Wellesley; but now I see all these things in a far different point of view. It is the highest pride of my life that anybody should ever have dreamed of my being put in the balance with him. His fame is now to me joy, and, I may almost say, glory."

Baird had a more immediate *revanche*, for in 1801 he superseded Wellesley in command of the expedition sent to Egypt. In the interval Wellesley had administered Seringapatam and Mysore with great wisdom and spirit, establishing order and good government, enforcing economy, checking "rascality," and gaining the approval of his brother, who wrote: "Your conduct in Mysore has gained you great credit, and assured your advancement in after life." While thus peacefully engaged he could still find employment as a military leader, and his campaign against the notorious freebooter Dhoondiah, "the King of the World," was characterised with extraordinary vigour. Soon Wellesley was sent to Trincomalee to concert measures for an attack either upon Batavia or Mauritius, and, while there, had the hardihood to direct the troops

collected at Ceylon upon Bombay, in order to co-operate on the latest scheme of all, the expedition to Egypt. He acted thus promptly on his own authority, and his conduct was not exactly approved, as likely to cause an "inconvenient precedent." Following the force to Bombay, he was there met with the disappointing news that Baird, not he, was to command the force going to Egypt. Wellington in his turn resented this "supersession," although Baird was a general officer and he only a colonel; but he deemed it "a great blow to his professional prospects." While giving vent to his irritation in private letters, his public demeanour was, however, quite proper. He agreed to serve as second in command. "I am not quite satisfied," he wrote, "with the manner in which I have been treated; however, I have lost neither my health, spirits, or temper. . . . I have never had much value for the public spirit of any man who does not sacrifice his private views and convenience when it is necessary."

This good feeling prompted him, as I have said, to place at Sir David Baird's disposal all the information he had collected when believing he himself was to command, and no doubt he would have served with loyalty and skill as lieutenant. But now illness seized him, and he was unable to sail

with the force. This illness has been called fever, but the Duke told Earl Stanhope long afterwards that it was no more than the "Malabar itch," which he had caught in a strange bed on ship-board, and which, although pertinacious, was never a serious complaint.

Fortune continued to smile on Wellesley. The expedition to the Red Sea was successful, but produced no definite results; while Wellesley, by remaining in India, fell in for a large share in the now imminent Mahratta war. His task was to advance to succour Poonah, the Peishwah's capital, which he effected with praiseworthy promptitude, in a forced march made by his cavalry; sixty miles in thirty hours. He was then nominated to deal with both the political and military situation, on the grounds of his "approved zeal, ability, temper, and judgment, combined with extensive local knowledge." Negotiations followed with Scindia and Holkar which lasted into August, but were abruptly terminated on the 8th August, when Wellesley seized Ahmednuggur and thus gained a strong place covering Poonah.

24*th Aug.* He crossed the Godavery and occupied Aurungabad, as a counter movement against the Mahrattas, who threatened Hyderabad.

12*th Sept.* Colonel Stevenson, who co-operated

with the Nizam's army, carried Jalna, and effected a junction with Wellesley on the 21st at Budnapore.

A combined attack upon the enemy's forces was then arranged—Stevenson to take the left or western route, Wellesley the eastern.

23rd Sept. Wellesley came upon the whole Mahratta army drawn up behind the Kaitna River, 50,000 men, largely cavalry, with 128 guns—their right at Bokerdun, the left on Assaye. He had only 8000 men all told, 1500 of them Europeans; and his 17 guns, drawn by exhausted bullocks, could not be trusted to do much execution. He was called upon to make an immediate and most momentous decision. To retire in front of Scindia's numerous cavalry would be perilous; to wait for Stevenson, still a day's march distant, meant sacrificing a great opportunity; to attack at once was still more hazardous.

The offensive was a "desperate expedient," yet he took it, and threw himself upon the enemy's left by a ford he had discovered. Scindia changed front, now resting his right upon the Kaitna, his left on the village of Assaye, while his guns dealt terrible havoc among the advancing assailants. Wellesley saw that his only hope was the bayonet, and gave orders to charge home. The position was carried and victory seemed near, when the enemy rallied

and were once more charged by Wellesley with the reserve, the 78th foot, the 19th Dragoons, and the 7th native cavalry, which drove them off the field. "Never," says Southey, "was a battle gained against such tremendous odds. The enemy had ten times as many combatants in the field as the English . . . his artillery was far superior, his cannonade frightful. . . ." "I have no language to express the admirable conduct of the troops. They moved in the best order, and with the greatest steadiness, under the most murderous fire."[1]

Assaye was Wellesley's first independent action, and is deeply interesting as the first real evidence of his fine military character. The antecedent operations had shown him full of dash and energy; the battle proved that he closely calculated the chances and was yet capable of taking the highest risks in pursuit of great ends. He who could fling a small force against a disciplined enemy ten times his strength, strongly posted, with overwhelming artillery, was no ordinary leader. In after years he attributed this victory chiefly to the very simple exercise of common-sense. He knew that he must attack or be destroyed; knew, also, that to attack he must first cross the river. His guides assured him that it was impassable; the enemy was too

[1] General Wellesley's despatch.

strong to allow him to examine it unmolested. Then with his glass he made out two villages built one on either bank, and he sagely concluded that "there must be habitual means of communication between them, either by boat or a ford—most probably the latter." The guides still persisted there was no ford, but Wellesley resolved, on the strength of his own reasoning, to risk the advance to the river. There he found the passage. He crossed, and was safe from the enemy's cavalry on the bank he had left; he now found himself between two streams that covered his flanks, while his force just filled the intervening space. "And there I fought and won the battle, the bloodiest for the numbers I ever saw; and this was all from the common-sense guessing that men do not build villages on the opposite sides of a stream without some means of communication between them."

When, at the end of the Mahratta war, Wellesley returned to England, he came ahead of his reputation. Although greatly honoured, fêted, and appreciated by all classes in India—superiors, comrades, subordinates, the whole native community—he was hardly known at home. Had he not been backed by family influence he would probably have received no recognition for his brilliant services. As the brother of Lord Wellesley he could not be quite ignored,

and he received the Red Riband of the Bath, with the command of a brigade at Hastings. Then he entered the House of Commons, and held office as Chief Secretary for Ireland. But his heart was with his own work, and he gladly accepted the command of a division in Lord Cathcart's expedition against Copenhagen, where he won the action of Kioge, an attack boldly made upon an entrenched position.

Despite all this, he had not yet gained the confidence of his military superiors. "The Horse Guards never showed me any favour . . . thought little of an Indian victory; it was rather a ground of suspicion than confidence. Because I was an M.P. they thought I must be a politician and not a soldier; they looked on me as a sprig of nobility come into the army for ornament, and no use. Could not believe I was a tolerable regimental officer. . . . I have proof that they thought I could not be entrusted alone with a division. . . . When the Horse Guards are obliged to employ one of those fellows like me, they give him what they call a second in command—one in whom they *have* confidence—kind of dry-nurse. When I went to Zealand they gave me General Stewart. . . . During the embarkation, the voyage out, and the disembarkation Stewart did everything. . . . At last, however, we came up with the enemy. Stewart, as usual,

was beginning his suggestions and arrangements, but I stopped him short with 'Come, come, it's my turn now.' I immediately made my own dispositions, assigned him the command of one of the wings, gave him his orders, attacked the enemy and beat them. Stewart, like a man of sense, saw in a moment that I understood my business, and subsided (as far as I saw) with good humour into his proper place.

"But this did not cure the Horse Guards. When I went to Portugal they gave me Sir Brent Spencer as second in command; but I came to an explanation with him. I told him I did not know what second in command meant, any more than third or fourth or fifth in command. I alone commanded the army; that the other officers commanded their divisions; that if anything happened to me, the senior survivor would take command; that, in contemplation of such a possibility, I would treat him, but him in particular as next in succession, with the most entire confidence, and would leave none of my views or intentions unexplained; but that I would have no second in command in the sense of his having anything like a joint command or superintending control; and that finally, and above all, I would not only take but insist upon the whole and undivided responsibility of all that should happen when the army was under my command."

CHAPTER III

PORTUGAL: 1808

Given and again deprived of command—Disembarks force at the Mondego.

NOW when Wellesley was on the threshold of his larger achievements he was all but shut out from the chance of proving his capacity. The distrust of his military masters pursued him, and many arguments were invoked to deprive him of the command in the Peninsula. The Cabinet gave him their confidence, but not the Horse Guards. When the British Government, putting aside a dozen vain projects, decided at length to succour Spain and Portugal in their patriotic contest against Napoleon, the expedition was at first placed under the orders of Sir Arthur. He had hardly embarked before he was superseded—not, as has been stated, because the force was too large for a major-general's command (for he was already a lieutenant-general, although nearly the junior of his rank), but because the reigning powers at the Horse Guards could not believe in this upstart young man. They

thought an officer of greater weight, older, and with larger experience, was needed. The Duke of York, then Commander-in-Chief, was all in favour of seniority ; he declined to accept the principle that youthful vigour was a strong, although not indispensable qualification in a general, and ignored such examples as those of Marlborough, Wolfe, and Napoleon.[1] Accordingly four lieutenant-generals, all senior to Wellesley, were appointed to the expedition. These were Sir Hew Dalrymple, Sir Harry Burrard, Sir John Moore, and Sir David Baird. Dalrymple was fifty-eight, Burrard fifty-three, Moore forty-seven, and Baird fifty-one years of age. The two last named had seen much varied service, and were distinguished in the field ; Dalrymple and Burrard were what might be styled barrack-yard soldiers, good useful officers, well thought of by the authorities, who had served respectably through all the grades, but had not seen war on any large scale. Wellesley's Indian experience and successes, if fairly considered, entitled him to be preferred before any of those whom the Horse Guards now put over him.

The news of his supersession met Wellesley on his arrival off the coast of Portugal. He faced the disappointment with his customary good temper

[1] It is said that the Duke of York himself looked for the command.

and unfailing public spirit. "I shall be the junior of the lieutenant-generals," he wrote Lord Castlereagh; "however, I am ready to serve the Government wherever and as they please." Again he writes: "All I can say upon the subject is, that whether I am to command of the army or not, or am to quit it, I shall do my best to secure its success; and you may depend upon it that I shall not hurry the operations or commence them one moment sooner than they ought to be commenced in order that I may acquire the credit of success."

Withal Wellesley was not the man to let slip golden opportunities. There was work to be done, by him or others; he was still in command, and he acted with his usual judgment and promptitude. Having decided to disembark at the mouth of the Mondego River, for sound military reasons, he began the operation on the 1st August and completed it on the 8th. "Further delay in disembarkation," he reported, "might have discouraged the country;" besides, he knew that he would be better able to arrange for "the movement and supply of the army when it shall be ashore than while it shall continue afloat." At this the very first blush of the business he was brought face to face with the difficulty that pressed him most sorely

throughout the whole campaign. "I find the British commissariat to be ill-composed and incapable," he reported. Hence, in choosing his line of advance, he prefers that which will keep him in touch with the fleet, although communication on this storm-vexed coast was likely to be precarious. This further encouraged him to adopt an immediate and vigorous offensive. The lateness of the season, and the fact that after August the fleet would be compelled to take the open sea, impressed on him the importance of undertaking operations without loss of time. Leaving a letter of explanation to Sir Harry Burrard, who was hourly expected at the coast, he pushed on.

Junot, who commanded the French in Portugal, at once prepared to resist Wellesley's advance, which was rapid and well-directed; it cut in between the French generals Loison and Laborde, leaving the latter to withstand singly the brunt of the British attack. The action of Roliça, the first fought and won by Wellesley in the Peninsula, disposed of Laborde. The English leader then advanced towards Lisbon, still clinging to the coast and the fleet, which had arrived with further reinforcements. Meanwhile Junot had concentrated, and coming up in strength, found Wellesley in position at Vimiero, halted there by Burrard's direction

—for the paralysing hand of the new commander was already extended to check enterprise.

Fortunately the French took the initiative; Junot attacked, rashly, and without reconnoitring the English position. The result was the victory of Vimiero, in which Junot was so roughly handled that, with vigorous pursuit, his whole army must have been destroyed. Again the excessive prudence of Sir Harry Burrard robbed success of its proper triumphs. Wellesley wished to follow up the advantage: "I think if General Hill's brigade and the advanced guard had moved upon Torres Vedras . . . the enemy would have been cut off . . . and we should have been in Lisbon before him; if, indeed, any French had remained in Portugal."[1] "If I had not been prevented," he wrote Charles Stuart, "I should have pursued the enemy, and in all probability the whole would have been destroyed." How greatly he was annoyed by the order to halt, was shown by his contemptuous remark to his staff when he received it. "Then, gentlemen," he said, "there is nothing left for us to do but to hunt red-legged partridges."

It is right to add that neither in his letters nor in his public utterances did he blame Burrard: "I have always entertained the opinion that Sir Harry

[1] Wellesley to Duke of York, 22nd August 1808.

Burrard decided upon fair military grounds, in the manner which appeared to him to be most conducive to the interests of the country; and that he had no motive for his decision which could be supposed personal to me, or which as an officer he could not avow." Moreover, Burrard's decision was backed by his chief staff-officers, Clinton and Murray, respectively adjutant- and quartermaster-general; and Napier, although he qualifies it as "erroneous," admits that "error is common in an art which at best is but a choice of difficulties; the circumstances of the moment were imposing enough to sway most generals. . . ." Again, "The facility of executing Sir Arthur's plan was not so imposing on the field of battle as it was in the 'closet.'"

Burrard's period of control was short-lived. The day after Vimiero he in his turn was superseded by Sir Hew Dalrymple, a leader quite as unenterprising as Burrard. Both agreed in their veto of Wellesley's proposal that Moore, who had arrived with his division off the Mondego, should disembark there and march south-east to intercept the French communications with Madrid. There was no sympathy between Dalrymple and his great lieutenant. "I had reason to believe that I did not possess his confidence," he told the court of

inquiry upon the Convention of Cintra; "nay more, that he was prejudiced against the opinions which I should give him." It was Dalrymple he had in his mind when he said before the same court: "It has been my misfortune to have been accused of temerity and imprudence, as well as of excess of caution, in the late transactions in Portugal;[1] but without appealing to the result of what happened at the moment I gave over the command of the army, I may safely assert that whatever might be the difficulty of the operation, I had taken what means existed to bring it to a fortunate conclusion; and that there was no ground for the apprehension of my safety which Sir Hew Dalrymple seems to have entertained."

Wellesley was certainly not happy under the altered circumstances of the army in Portugal. He was cheered a little, no doubt, by the knowledge that he had earned the good-will of his comrades in arms. The general officers who had been under him sent him an address expressing their firm belief in him and their congratulations on his success, to which he replied with the modest disclaimer that he owed all to their cordial support and to the gallantry of the officers and soldiers, "stimulated by your example and their discipline, aided and

[1] Campaign of Vimiero.

directed by your experience and ability." These were his consolations, but his heart was really sore at his supersession. He did not wish to remain in Portugal. "Matters are not prospering here, and I feel an earnest desire to quit the army. I have been too successful with this army ever to serve with it in a subordinate situation with satisfaction to the person who shall command, and of course not to myself. However, I shall do whatever the Government may wish."

Writing again on the same subject, he tells Lord Castlereagh, "It is quite impossible for me to continue any longer with this army." He asks to be allowed to return to his post as Secretary for Ireland, if convenient to the Government; if not, that he may be appointed to the staff in England, "or, if that should not be practicable, that I should remain without employment." "You will hear from others of the various causes which I must have for being dissatisfied, not only with the military and other public measures of the commander-in-chief, but with his treatment of myself. I am convinced it is better for him, for the army, and for me that I should go away; and the sooner I go the better." This friction, the want of harmony, the failure on the one hand to appreciate the great soldier at his proper value, his almost contemptuous

resentment on the other, the little support given him at home, lasted till Waterloo.

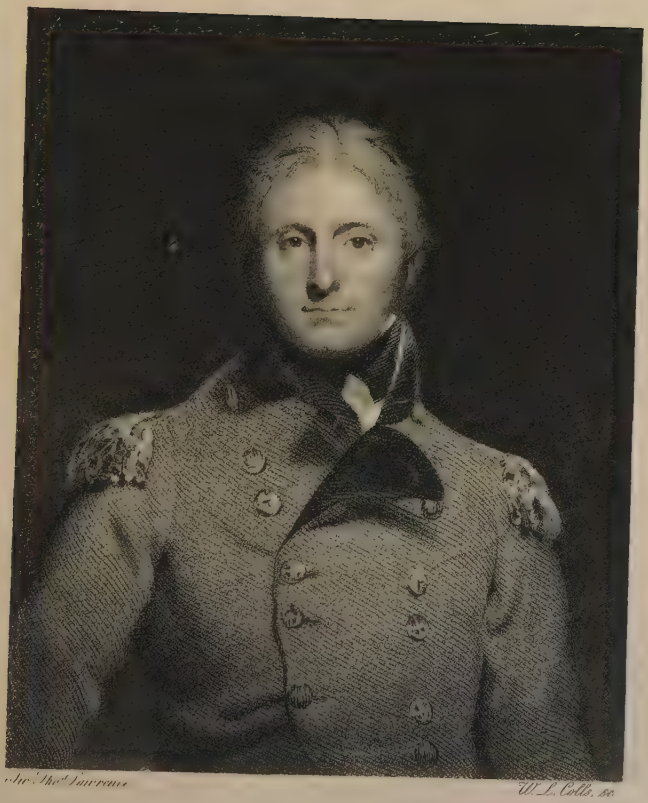
Wellesley's feelings at this period, when his budding career might have been so easily blighted and his deep anxiety that others should escape the slights which he endured, may be gathered from the letter he wrote Sir John Moore in September 1808. The condition of the army in Portugal under its present leaders gave Wellesley great concern. "It appears to me quite impossible that we can go on as we are now constituted; the commander-in-chief (Dalrymple) must be changed, and the country and the army naturally turn their eyes to you as their commander." Wellesley then touches delicately upon supposed differences between Moore and the king's ministers at home, and offers himself as an intermediary to set them right. "Although I hold a high office under government,[1] I am no party man, but have long been connected in friendship with many of those persons who are now at the head of affairs in England; and I think I have sufficient influence over them that they may listen to me upon a point of this description, more particularly as I am convinced they must be as desirous as I can be to adopt the arrangement for the command of this army which all are agreed is the best.

[1] He was still Secretary for Ireland.

In these times, my dear general, a man like you should not preclude himself from rendering the services of which he is capable from any idle point of form." Wellington always expressed the highest opinion of Sir John Moore. The army in Portugal at that time, he told Lord Stanhope,[1] believed there were only two officers present fit to command them, Sir John Moore and himself. On one occasion he told Moore this, adding, "You are the man—and I shall with great willingness act under you." This is further shown by his letter to Moore from London in 1808, when he believed that he was to return to the Peninsula at once. "I find I am to be under your command," he wrote, "than which nothing can be more satisfactory to me."

The Convention of Cintra now came to relieve Wellesley from his irksome, almost intolerable, situation. This agreement, by which Junot surrendered Portugal in exchange for a safe-conduct to France, was furiously condemned in England, and all the generals concerned were recalled to stand their trial. Wellesley was also implicated, although he repudiated all responsibility for the terms of the Convention. "I signed the document by His Excellency Sir Hew Dalrymple's desire. But as I

[1] 'Conversations," p. 244.



Sir Thos. Lawrence — W. L. Colls. Sc.

Sir John Moore

had not negotiated the agreement . . . I could not consider myself responsible in any degree for the terms in which it was framed, nor for any of its provisions." He writes to a friend, "I have only to regret that I put my name to an agreement of which I did not approve and which I did not negotiate." Yet Sir Arthur to Lord Castlereagh admits that he thought it expedient that the French army should be allowed to evacuate Portugal with their arms and baggage, and that every facility for this purpose should be afforded them. Viewing the Convention at this distance of time, we must accept the impartial verdict of Napier that it was "a great and solid advantage to the allies, a blunder on the part of the French." Junot was by no means at his last gasp. He had a line of retreat still open through Elvas, and could regain Madrid by Merida and Almaraz. The forts at Lisbon still held out, and must have been reduced in due form; Elvas and Almeida must also be captured; the possession of Lisbon and the mouth of Tagus was indispensable as a base of supply, for the fleet could not remain off the coast after the weather broke. All these operations demanded time, and they might not be successfully completed before Napoleon, already on the move to succour Junot, arrived. Napoleon himself disapproved of the Convention,

and said plainly that he would have sent Junot before a council of war, "when fortunately the English tried their generals, and so saved me from the pain of punishing an old friend."

The public outcry against the Convention could not be satisfied without the usual scapegoat. "Whom shall we hang?" was asked furiously in the press; and a court of inquiry sat at Chelsea Hospital, before which Dalrymple, Burrard, and Wellesley were arraigned. If further evidence were needed of the breadth and strength of Wellesley as a controversialist, dealing with facts within his own knowledge and in which he was intimately concerned, it is to be found in his narratives and addresses prepared for this court. They are most voluminous, but never wearisome; every point is touched on with a master-hand. Nothing can be more dexterous than the way in which Wellesley fights his own case, without separating himself from his colleagues and superiors or leaving them alone to bear the brunt of measures for which, after all, they and not he were responsible. I am inclined to think that Wellesley's defence settled once and for all the question of his military capacity. No one can read these admirable papers without admitting that they are the work of no common man. It is quite clear that they practically quashed

these ridiculous proceedings. The court was not unanimous on the wisdom or otherwise of the Convention, on which indeed they were hardly competent to give an opinion, but they agreed that no further judicial measures were necessary. The verdict, in short, was acquittal.

The irritation in the public mind was not yet appeased, however. In deference to it the generals incriminated were not permitted to return to Spain. Wellesley being still a member of Parliament, resumed his office as Secretary for Ireland, and was soon in a position to speak for himself in the House of Commons. The proposed vote of thanks to him and the army of Portugal was opposed, and the young general was bitterly assailed, especially by the well-known Banastre Tarleton, a general who had gained some distinction as a cavalry officer in the war with the American colonies. Tarleton gravely censured Wellesley's generalship,[1] committing himself to such silly strictures as that "there was something rash in the action of the 17th August" (Roliça, where the English outnumbered the French as three to one!), "something wrong in the action of the 21st"—a great victory,

[1] His animosity was said to be due to bitter jealousy; he thought he ought to have had the command in Portugal. Some notion of his principles may be gathered from one of his election cries, "Liberty and the slave trade."

robbed of its results by an interfering superior. Wellesley replied with great readiness and vigour, ably defending both the campaign and the Convention. His retort ended with a few pregnant words: "I would far rather follow the gallant general's example in the field than his advice in the senate," although it may be doubted whether he would have always conquered had he done so. Tarleton had yet another opportunity of venting his rancour upon Wellesley. Within a year of the debate upon the Convention of Cintra the Commons were called upon to again vote their thanks to Wellesley, now about to be created a peer. The proposed honour was fiercely opposed in Parliament, in the city of London, and by a portion of the press. One speaker in the Lords said: "Why reward Sir Arthur Wellesley? His actions are imprudent, foolish, and presumptuous. He does not know how to provide for the subsistence of his soldiers . . . he has exposed our army to unexampled calamities, and has conducted himself throughout so as to merit punishment rather than reward." The Common Council of London petitioned against the bill brought in to the Commons proposing a pension of £2000 a year to Wellington, and "implored the sovereign to prevent his ministers from rewarding one who in the campaign of Talavera had exhibited, with equal

rashness and ostentation, nothing but a useless valour."

The removal of Dalrymple and Burrard from Portugal left Moore in command of the army, now numbering some 40,000 men, and early in October he advanced into Spain. Some account of his operations, and of his famous retreat on Corunna which cost him his life, will be given hereafter when dealing with Moore—a fine soldier who deserved better fortune. Moore's failure did not shake the resolve of the British people to renew the contest in the Peninsula. Castlereagh sought Wellesley's advice, and got it in the form of a memorandum upon the defence of Portugal, which is another of the many remarkable papers drawn up by Wellesley in these early days. His views were clear and precise: "I have always been of opinion that Portugal might be defended, whatever might be the result of the contest in Spain; and that in the meantime the measures adopted for the defence of Portugal would be highly useful to the Spaniards in their contest with the French." The burthen of defence he would impose upon Portugal, backed and reinforced by a British contingent; the Portuguese army to be increased and reconstituted under the command of British officers, its cavalry and artillery completed, the guns re-horsed; the Portuguese

exchequer replenished by British gold. "If Portugal were properly held it could give occupation to, and probably withstand, 100,000 French troops." The strength of the strategic frontier of Portugal no doubt weighed also with so shrewd a military observer as Wellesley. Portugal as viewed from Spain presented a strong natural barrier of mountains pierced only by two good roads. These inlets were guarded by two places of arms—Almeida on the northern, Elvas on the southern approach. The whole country was one fortress, as it were; a secure foothold from which we could not be easily dislodged, a strong base from which to launch out in attack.

Wellesley's thorough grasp of the situation more than justified his reappointment to the command in the Peninsula. It is claimed for him by some eulogistic writers that even now, in 1809, he foresaw with the prescience of a great mind how the seemingly inexpugnable fabric of Napoleon's power might be undermined. He had realised, they say, and it is possibly true, the insecurity of its foundations; he saw that the colossal empire created by Napoleon's genius was of too rapid growth, and contained within itself the elements of decay. The tenacious resistance of a stubborn people, backed by British blood and British treasure, in a far-off corner

in Europe, might sap the strength of the universal conqueror, and bring about his overthrow in the end. It may be doubted whether Wellesley made any such precise and elaborate forecast, although he may have looked for, hoped for its accomplishment. But he was no dreamer ; he had, of course, a great end in view, to be compassed eventually, but only by the slow development of such means as he had at hand. These, as we shall see, were imperfect enough, but he made the most of them ; and his patience, his self-reliance, the painstaking and minute skill with which he overcame difficulties, lived down calumny, conquered incompetence and half-hearted support, are better proofs of his greatness than his undoubted genius in war.

CHAPTER IV

THE DOURO AND TALAVERA

Wellesley returns to Portugal—Nearly shipwrecked—The opposing armies—Passage of the Douro—Spanish allies worthless—Talavera—Privations of British troops—Critical position of Wellesley—His escape—Increasing difficulties of supply.

WELLESLEY, after a tempestuous voyage in H.M.S. *Surveillante*, which narrowly escaped shipwreck off the coast of the Isle of Wight, landed at Lisbon on 22nd April 1809, amid general rejoicings, and at once applied himself to the first part of his gigantic task, the expulsion of the French from Portugal.

It will be well here to review the position and relative strength of the opponents who were soon to come into collision.

Early this year Napoleon had laid his plans for the recovery of Portugal and the invasion of Andalucia. He had some 100,000 men available throughout the Peninsula, and three principal armies, backed by a strong reserve in Madrid, were set in motion.

1°. Soult, who occupied Gallicia, was to invade

Portugal from the north, seize Oporto, and march on Lisbon.

2°. Lapisse at Salamanca was to co-operate with Soult, moving though Ciudad Rodrigo on Abrantes, thus taking Soult's left flank.

3°. Victor, in the valley of the Tagus about Talavera, was to reach out to the south to Merida, whence he could reinforce Soult if required. When Soult had taken Lisbon, Victor and Lapisse combined were to invade Andalucia.

Much delay was caused by the bickerings of the French marshals; want of stores and cash further checked Soult, and he did not enter Oporto till the 29th March. Victor had refused to move until Lapisse, diverted from his right direction, had been ordered to join him at Merida. They were there united on the 22nd April, 30,000 strong. On that day Soult with 20,000 men was still in Oporto, his rear much hampered by Spanish and Portuguese insurgents.

Passage of the Douro.

22nd April.—Wellesley had under his command:

1°. 26,000 British and German troops massed at Leiria, south of the Mondego River.

2°. Beresford with the reorganised Portuguese regulars, 16,000 men, at Thomar.

3°. Some Portuguese militia who were watching Soult; and there were also

4°. Two Spanish armies collecting, one south of Merida under Cuesta, the other under Venegas at Carolina, behind the Sierra Morena.

Wellesley, eager to take the initiative, was now called upon to decide whether he would attack Soult or Victor. He resolved to adopt the first course, and detaching a small force towards Abrantes, to observe or "contain" Victor, he marched northward with his main body. He had good military reasons for choosing the attack on Soult. Although Victor was a more pressing danger to Lisbon, Soult was isolated, and if he could be driven out of the rich province he occupied, it would greatly revive the spirits of the Portuguese. Besides, moving with promptitude, Wellesley could be on the banks of the Douro before the news reached Victor, who was many more marches distant from Lisbon. He could first crush Soult (as he did), then return to deal with Victor.

5*th May*.—Wellesley was concentrated at Coimbra. That day Beresford with 6000 Portuguese was directed by Viseu and Lamego to cross high up the Douro, and strike at Amarante, on Soult's main line of communication with Spain.

11*th May*.—Wellesley came into touch and skirmished with Soult's advance. Soult withdrew entirely behind the Douro, and prepared to retreat on Amarante.

12*th May*.—Soult's move on Amarante would have jeopardised Beresford, so Wellesley decided to force the passage of the Douro at all hazards, and bring the enemy to action. The only bridge across this raging river 300 yards wide had been destroyed, and all the boats had been gathered in to the French side. Wellesley nevertheless secured four barges through the intrepidity of Colonel Waters, and threw over a first detachment into the Seminary, a strong building capable of defence, which, held by constant reinforcements, successfully resisted all Soult's attacks. More and more boats were obtained; the Guards crossed below, while Murray's brigade, which had forded the river at Avintas, came down from above. Soult was lost. He could only fall back hastily, his retreat soon degenerating into a disordered rout.

This daring operation, one of the most difficult, that of crossing a deep and rapid river in the face of an enemy strongly posted, and constituting "a surprise without example in the annals of war,"[1] was accomplished with a loss of only

[1] Thiers.

twenty killed. Soult lost 500 men, many guns, and much ammunition in Oporto. Now in his headlong flight on Amarante he found that Beresford had forestalled him, and his situation became most critical. He only escaped by destroying his baggage and artillery and taking a circuitous route by mule tracks and goat paths. When he gained Orense and Lugo on the 19th, his force was decimated and disorganised, being, as Jomini puts it, "in a far worse plight than Moore six months before."

Wellesley's passage of the Douro has been condemned as a rash act, but it was surely justified by its striking success. The plan of campaign was strategically sound, and the execution judicious. The rapidity of Wellesley's movements was extraordinary; within twenty-six days of his departure from England he had cleared Northern Portugal of the French and dealt Soult a terrible blow.

It was time now to turn southward. Victor and Lapisse, hoping to relieve the pressure upon Soult, had threatened Portugal. They were now in the valley of the Tagus, but they fell back, at Wellesley's approach, behind the Alberche, covering Madrid, and near Talavera, a name soon to become famous in military annals. Wellesley, coming by Abrantes, marched through Castello Branco, and was at Plasencia on the 27th June. He was now

to make his first experience of the worthlessness of his Spanish allies; to find the generals incompetent, the troops a mere rabble. He had to concert operations with Cuesta—an irritable, conceited, crotchety old man, who had already one leg in the grave, whose favourite conveyance in the field was a coach and six; if he mounted a horse it was with the assistance of grenadiers, who held him in the saddle; when he got off he went to sleep on the cushions brought from his carriage. The whimsical perverseness of his disposition made him more and more impracticable every day. "It is impossible to do business with him," wrote Wellesley, "and very uncertain that any operations will succeed in which he has any concern." The battle of Talavera was won in spite of him, after other fair opportunities had been lost; the victory was barren of great results, because Cuesta and all the Spanish authorities were faithless to their promises and left the British troops to starve.

Campaign of Talavera.

July 27th.—King Joseph, advancing with all men available from Madrid, had joined Victor, and the whole, 50,000 strong, moved rapidly forward to attack Wellesley, who was now in position at

Talavera. So rapid was their advance that Sir Arthur was himself almost caught at the outposts, and all but made prisoner. The Spaniards behind entrenchments held the right of the allied line, a post Cuesta would not take until he "made the proud Englishman go down on his knees" to implore his co-operation. The rest of the position—the centre and left—was occupied by the British and Germans.

28th July.—After a sharp contest the previous evening for the key of the position—during which many of the Spaniards, although safe behind earthworks, bolted to the rear — the real battle began about noon. It was fought out with great impetuosity and courage, but was won at last by the British, largely through Wellesley's tactical skill. He was ubiquitous on the field, always at the right place at the right moment, and by his masterly dispositions ever strongest at the decisive point. A greater general than Joseph might have made a final effort to retrieve disaster with his unbroken reserves, but Napoleon's brother was not Napoleon, and next day the French drew off again behind the Alberche.

It was the first great encounter in the war. The brunt of it was borne by the British, and it fully proved both their true soldierly qualities and the

generalship of their leader. Yet the troops were largely recruits and militia; "with the exception of the Guards and a few others, there were more knapsacks with the names of militia regiments on them than of numbered regular regiments." And the men fought starving. A few grains of wheat had been their sole sustenance for many hours previous. On the night of the 27th, before the great battle, soldiers prayed to be allowed to go down and fight, because "when engaged they forgot their hunger." "It is a positive fact," Wellesley wrote on the 31st, "that during the last seven days the British army have not received one-third of their provisions, and that at this moment there are nearly 4000 wounded soldiers dying in hospital for want of common assistance and necessaries which any other country in the world would have given even to its enemies. I positively will not move, nay more, I will disperse my army, till I am supplied with provisions and means of transport as I ought to be." This retreat was forced upon him by other causes, as we shall see; but the want of supplies would, in any case, have made it inevitable. "A starving army is worse than none," was Wellesley's lamentation at this time; "the soldiers lose their discipline and spirit. . . . A fortnight ago they beat double their numbers. I should now hesitate to meet a French corps of

half their strength." Again he remarks: "If we had had 60,000 men instead of 20,000, in all probability we should not have got to Talavera to fight, for want of means and provisions. They could have got no farther in any case, and the armies must have separated for want of subsistence, probably without a battle, certainly afterwards."

Now, however, a sudden and unexpected danger arose, over and above the needs of the army, and obliged him peremptorily to retreat. The Spanish alliance was valueless even in the one respect of obtaining early and authentic intelligence; and Cuesta, in his own country, with every facility for gaining news, remained ignorant to the last of movements to the northward that now placed the allies in a position of imminent peril. Three French army corps had concentrated north of the Douro, under the orders of the lately discomfited Soult, following the sagacious conclusion of Napoleon, who, although in Austria far removed from the theatre of war, had written: "Wellesley will most likely advance by the Tagus against Madrid. In that case pass the mountains, fall on his flank and rear, and crush him." The concentration was long delayed by the ever-present jealousies of the marshals, but on the 18th July, Soult, Ney, and Mortier combined under the command of the first named:

50,000 men were in motion on Salamanca and the Pass of Baños. This pass and that of Perales adjoining were the only practicable roads through the mountains, and Wellesley now thought to bar both passages, entrusting the duty to Cuesta, who entirely neglected it.

On the 31st July Soult's advance entered Plasencia, and on 3rd August the first news thereof reached Wellesley at Oropesa. He now learnt to his dismay, moreover, that Soult had three corps with him; that he had cut him from one line of retreat across the Tagus, by the bridge of Almaraz; and that Cuesta, terrified by Joseph's renewed advance from Madrid, had abandoned Talavera, crowded with English wounded.

Wellesley's position was thus critical in the extreme. The peril was apparent not to him alone, but to every soldier in the British ranks. His very existence was jeopardised. Overwhelming numbers hemmed him; the French were acting in combination against his front, his van, and his line of retreat. It was an occasion that demanded the highest fortitude, the utmost despatch. Wellesley rose to it, and at once fell back across the Tagus, using the bridge at Arzobispo, and adopting the line of Truxillo-Merida on Badajoz and the Portuguese frontier. What he felt himself may be gathered

from his own words: "We were in a bad scrape, and I really believe that if I had not determined to retire at the moment I did, all retreat would have been cut off for us both" (himself and Cuesta).

Thus ended the campaign of the Douro and Talavera, a series of brilliant successes neutralised by causes beyond his control. "I hope," he writes home, "that my public despatch will justify me from all blame in the eyes of his Majesty's Ministers except that of having trusted the Spaniards in anything." His painful experience of this had been already recorded in a despatch written before the retreat: "We are worse off here (Talavera) than in an enemy's country. The Spaniards make all sorts of promises and accomplish none; their armies render us no assistance whatever; on the contrary, we are obliged to abandon our stores and to empty the military chest to employ the waggons in transporting the sick and wounded. They (the Spaniards) violate all the laws of humanity, and compel us to leave behind ammunition, provisions, and money. Everything must be done by the English army."

Again on the same subject, when retreating, he says:[1] "This army will be useless in Spain, and will be entirely lost if this treatment is to continue; and I must say that if any efficient measures of relief

[1] 8th August 1809, to Marquis Wellesley, British Minister at Cadiz.

had been adopted by the (Spanish) Government when they first received accounts of our distresses from the want of provisions, we ought before now to have received the benefit of them." He sharply upbraids the Spanish commanders, who had promised that the privations should cease, that there should be plenty of food in future, for their breach of faith, and declares that he has no confidence in their assurances. "I give no credit to the accounts of the existence of resources said to be upon the road (in what place not known), or of any others in the magazine at Truxillo." The latter he found, from reports received, did "not contain enough to feed the British army one day only." He holds the Spanish authorities responsible for the consequences of this shameful neglect; those "who have allowed a brave army that was rendering gratuitous service to Spain, that was able and willing to pay for everything it received, to starve in the centre of their country, and to be reduced by want almost to a state of inefficiency." Once more he plainly warns Lord Wellesley: "Till the evils of which I think I have reason to complain are remedied; till I shall see magazines established for the supply of the armies, and a regular system adopted for keeping them filled; and an army on whose exertions I can depend, commanded by officers capable and willing

to carry into execution the operations which may be planned by mutual agreement, I cannot enter upon any system of co-operation with the Spanish armies." From henceforth he will fight for the Spaniards, but never with them. He puts this plainly before the British Government in a letter that deserves to be quoted at length in this place :—

"I wish that the eyes of the people of England were open to the real state of affairs in Spain, as mine are; and I only hope, if they should not be so now, that they will not purchase the experience by the loss of an army. We have gained a great and glorious victory over more than double our numbers, which has proved to the French that they are not the first military nation in the world.[1] But the want of common management in the Spaniards, and of the common assistance which every country gives to an army and of which this country gives most plentifully to the French, have deprived us of all the fruits of it. The Spaniards have neither numbers, efficiency, discipline, bravery, nor arrangement to carry on the contest." Again he reminds Marshal Beresford that it is a mistake to think that the Portuguese and Spanish armies only wanted

[1] "This battle (Talavera) recovered the glory of the successors of Marlborough, which for a century had declined. It was felt that the English infantry could contend with the best in Europe."—*Jomini.*

"discipline, properly so called. They want the habits and spirit of soldiers—the habits of command on one side and of obedience on the other—mutual confidence between officers and men, and, above all, the determination in the superiors to obey the orders they receive, let what will be the consequence, and the spirit to tell the true cause if they do not."

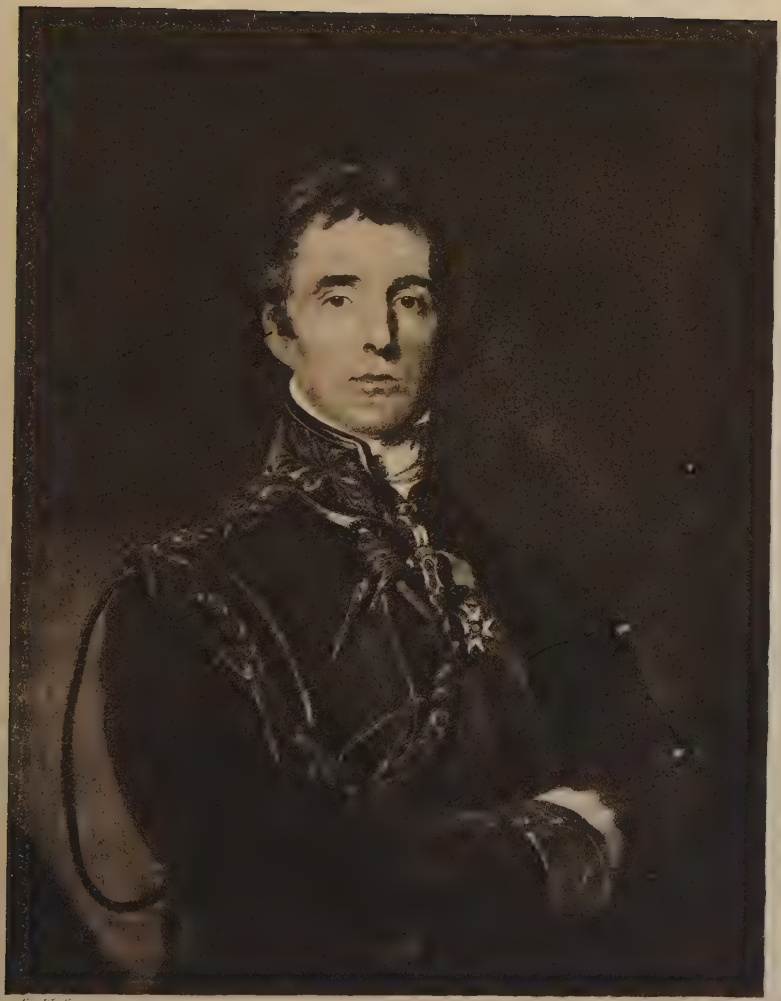
CHAPTER V

WELLINGTON LEFT TO HIS OWN RESOURCES

His steadfast sanguine spirit—He works "like a galley-slave"—Troublesome officers—Crime in his army—Outrages and excesses—Punitive measures—His minute supervision.

THE epoch through which Wellington[1] had now entered, beginning with the retreat from Talavera and lasting through the years 1809, 1810, and 1811, is surely the most remarkable in his whole career. Now, when most sorely tried, he gave convincing proof of his fine qualities and securely consolidated his reputation. It will be well to pause and consider his position at this particular time. Here was a great man struggling with adversity, one bearing a grievous burthen alone and almost unaided, with no firm backing from home. All he could get from the Government was a confession of their own weakness. "We are powerless," they wrote him.

[1] The petty opposition in Parliament that would have denied his services their proper recognition had happily been defeated, and in August 1809 he was created a peer by the titles of Baron Douro of Wellesley and Viscount Wellington of Talavera.



Sir T. Lawrence. W. L. Colls, sc.

Duke of Wellington.

"Be prudent; above all, run no risks." His own opinion of these masters was low enough: "The Government are terribly afraid I shall get them into a scrape. But what can be expected from men who are beaten in the House of Commons three times a week? A great deal might be done now if there existed in England less party and more public sentiment, or if there was any public sentiment." [1]

He knew full well that he would get no support. But he was quite undaunted. "I act with a sword hanging over me (this was apropos of the attack made on him by the Corporation of London), which will fall upon me whatever may be the result of affairs here; but they may do what they please: I shall not give up the game here as long as it can be played." "I believe there never was any officer, but certainly never a British officer, placed in so difficult a situation as I am in." "If ever there were an officer at the head of an army interested (personally, I may say) in keeping down the expenses of the army, it is myself; for I am left wholly to my own resources, and am obliged to supply the wants of the allies, as well as of the British army, from what I can get; and if I fail, God will, I hope, have mercy upon me, for nobody else will."

[1] To Admiral Berkeley, 1810.

He knew, of course, of the attack made upon him in Parliament, and retorted that it had not "given him one moment's concern," so far as he was personally concerned; "indeed I rejoice at it,[1] as it has given my friends an opportunity of setting the public right on some points on which they had not been informed, and on others on which the misrepresentations had driven the truth from their memories. But I regret that men like Lord ——[2] and others should carry the spirit of party so far as to attack an officer in his absence, should take the ground of their attack from Cobbett and the *Moniteur*, and should at once blame him for circumstances and events over which he could have no control, and for faults which, if they were committed at all, were not committed by him."

His steadfastness and self-reliance under these adverse and irritating conditions compels unbounded admiration. "Being embarked in a course of military operations of which I hope to see the successful termination, I shall continue to carry them on to the end.[3] Having been entrusted with the command and exclusively with the conduct of the military operations, I will not suffer them (the

[1] To Lord Liverpool, the head of the Ministry.
[2] Lord Grenville or Lord Moira.
[3] To Charles Stuart, relative to Principal Souza's interference with him.

Portuguese Regency) or anybody else to interfere with them; that I know best where to station my troops and where to make a stand against the enemy, and I shall not alter a system framed upon mature consideration upon any suggestion of theirs. I am responsible for what I do, and they are not. False reports and deceptions of every description are tried. . . . However, nothing of this kind shall make me take one step either way which is not dictated by my sense of what is best for the cause."

He was still sanguine in the teeth of all trials and rebuffs. "The affairs of the Peninsula," he remarks most philosophically, "have invariably had the same appearance since I have known them; they have always appeared to be lost; means have always appeared inadequate to objects; and the sole dependence of the whole has apparently been upon us. The contest, however, still continues, and is in its third year. . . . The French threaten us at all points, and are most desirous to get rid of us. But they threaten at too many points at a time to give me much uneasiness respecting any one in particular, and they shall not induce me to disconnect my army. I am in a situation in which no mischief can be done to the army or any part of it; I

am prepared for all events; and if I am in a scrape, as appears to be the general belief in England, although certainly not my own, I'll get out of it."[1]

All this time there was enough in his daily work as commander of the forces and general administrator to unnerve and discourage any but the strongest, the most self-reliant and resourceful man. "I work like a galley-slave," he wrote his brother at Cadiz, "and yet I effect nothing." He has given us a striking picture of himself, drawn by his own pen, in those famous despatches of his, which bear such ample testimony to his generalship, his prescience, his masterfulness, and, above all, his unwearied industry and indomitable pluck. It will be seen that he did nearly everything himself; controlled every department civil and military, often created them or improved their machinery, dealt direct with their heads and with the British representatives at Lisbon and Cadiz. In all army matters, the business of his own profession, he of course showed himself thoroughly at home. He exercised the functions of command with the same intimate knowledge, the same minute attention to details, that have already been noticed in his Indian campaigns.

[1] To Colonel Torrens, Military Secretary at the Horse Guards.

This may be at once observed by a perusal of his correspondence, and the general orders issued from time to time, which were presently codified and printed for easy reference. Both *personnel* and *materiel* become objects of his minute painstaking care. Officers general and regimental, the rank and file, the interior economy of units, the marches, baggage, discipline, supplies and so forth: he touches upon all in turn, always thoroughly, often at great length.

His generals often gave him much trouble. There was the case of one subordinate who protested against being called upon to command a brigade with which Portuguese troops were incorporated; but Lord Wellington declines to give any engagement that this officer should be employed with any particular description of troops. "As commander-in-chief of the allied army," he says, "I consider myself wholly and solely responsible that his Majesty's troops shall not be employed in improper situations, and the major-generals or other superior officers responsible only that they and those under them do their duty in the situation in which they may be employed." The over-punctilious general in question was therefore told that he might resign his command and go home. In those early years of the war he had

been unable to secure the assistance of invariably the right men; as yet he had come to trust few of those about him except Hill, Beresford, Graham, and Craufurd; and he evidently doubted Horse Guards patronage, for we find he earnestly implored Lord Liverpool to see that no violent party men were sent out to him: "We must keep the spirit of party out of the army, or we shall be in a bad way indeed."

If he looked askance at some of his generals, he equally disapproved of many officers in the lower grades, and visited upon them much of the blame for the frequent misconduct of his troops. He was unhesitatingly of opinion that the whole discipline and regularity of the army depended upon the regimental officers, particularly of the subalterns, and that they often failed in their duty in this respect: "I may order what I please; but if they (the officers) do not execute what I order, or if they execute with negligence, I cannot expect that British soldiers will be orderly or regular." He was satisfied that all soldiers, young or old, could march long distances, and answer all the calls made upon them, if once their officers were properly attentive, if they saw to the men's food, "if they prevented them from straggling from their corps on a march, or from their quarters or camp in search of wine

and plunder after the march is made." Once again, in a general order, he says emphatically : "Officers of companies must attend to the men in their quarters as well as on the march, or the army will very soon be no better than a banditti."

Crime was no doubt terribly prevalent in the Peninsular army almost from first to last. It is with a sense of shame that we accept the undoubted and most humiliating evidence of the despatches and orders on this particular point—evidence fully corroborated by contemporary history. Wellington was often upbraided in after years for his scathing reflections upon the troops to whom he owed his triumphs. He was prepared to admit that he could always trust them to get him out of a scrape where Soult's men would have left him in the lurch. Yet he was ungenerous enough to call them "the scum of the earth," and to declare that all English soldiers enlisted for drink or to escape the consequences of evil-doing. Almost in the same breath, however, he adds that "they are fine fellows," and, "considering their origin, it is wonderful so much is made out of them after enlistment." The truth is always unpalatable, but it was still true that the turbulent element preponderated in the Peninsular army, and that when it came to the surface, as at the sack of Badajoz or St. Sebastian, the bravest men proved

miscreants, and foul scenes were enacted that disgraced the British name.

The curse of Wellington's army was drink, as it has been of most British armies, until these latter days, when happily the vice of drunkenness among our soldiers is fast disappearing. Some allowances must certainly be made for those Peninsular men, who were exposed to so many privations, and thus constantly tempted into marauding and excess. It was true that "they could not resist wine,"[1] a fruitful source of crime in these campaigns; but they had to fight also against hunger, a much more imperious need. Yet the whole indictment against them is grave, and their general's repeated, well-substantiated, indignant complaints are not the pleasantest reading. Now, he says (31st May 1809): "I have long been of opinion that a British army could bear neither success nor failure, and I have had many proofs of the truth of this opinion in the first of its branches in the recent conduct of the troops." Again, on the same date, to Lord Castlereagh: "The army behaves terribly ill. They are a rabble who cannot bear success any more than Sir John Moore's

[1] "No soldier can withstand the temptation of wine. This is constantly before their eyes in this country, and they are constantly intoxicated when they are absent from their regiments. There is no crime which they do not commit to obtain money to purchase it, or if they cannot get money, to obtain it by force."—Wellington to Colonel Torrens, November 1810.

army could bear failure. I am endeavouring to tame them, but if I should not succeed, I must make an official complaint of them, and send one or two corps home in disgrace. They plunder in all directions."

A fortnight later he writes: "I cannot with propriety omit to draw attention again to the state of discipline of the army, which is a subject of serious concern to me, and well deserves the consideration of his Majesty's Ministers. It is impossible to describe to you the irregularities and outrages committed by the troops; outrages are committed whenever they are out of sight of their officers. Notwithstanding the pains I take, . . . not a post or courier comes in, not an officer arrives from the rear of the army, that does not bring me accounts of outrages committed by the soldiers. . . ." The general orders contain frequent references to these excesses: "The commander of the forces is concerned to hear that last night several soldiers came into the town of Badajoz and plundered a bakery and the houses of several individuals of bread." Notwithstanding repeated orders, the men will plunder beehives. "The practice of taking roots and vegetables without paying for them must be entirely discontinued." There is still worse. Capital punishment must be adjudged for a crime

"too common in this army"; several soldiers were executed for robbing and ill-treating an inhabitant of this country whom they met on the road—a crime which "the commander of the forces is determined in no instance to forgive." He is next concerned to publish details of murder committed by the troops; "the men were in uniform, and after the murders they robbed the house of money and jewellery." In February 1810 three privates were arraigned before a general court-martial for highway robbery, and sentenced to be hanged; the same fate meets another for plunder and desertion, and two more for burglariously entering a dwelling-house. Burglary and highway robbery were common crimes in Portugal; so was drunkenness on duty, desertion, mutiny, and insubordination, laying embargo on carts and transport animals, and various high-handed proceedings against the native population.

There is but an occasional short-lived ray of light in all this darkness. "I certainly think the army are improved. They are a better army than they were some months ago," he writes to Lord Liverpool. "But still these terrible continued outrages give me reason to apprehend that, notwithstanding all the precautions I have taken and shall take, they will slip through my fingers, as

they did through Sir John Moore's, when I shall be involved in any nice operation with a powerful enemy in my front." The precautions of which he speaks were strictly repressive measures, such as he had learnt to use in India, and now again applied with even increased severity: "The rolls shall be called in the different corps of the 4th Division every hour till further orders, and the commander of the forces desires that no soldier may be allowed to quit his lines on any account, except in charge of an officer. The provost must punish all found disobeying this order."

The provost-marshal had plenary powers and several assistants; it was their business to enforce obedience to army general orders, and preserve discipline among soldiers and camp followers by a summary administration of the "cat." The last power was, however, strictly limited, and corporal punishment could only be inflicted upon offenders caught in the very act. The provost's authority, as defined by Lord Wellington later, was "based only upon necessity and custom, and should be jealously watched." He might hang out of hand those caught committing outrage, but this power of life and death was not extended to his assistants, who could not execute even the most heinous offenders. In the case of the plundered beehives,

Wellington ordered that the regiment owning the marauders should be at once "turned out and placed under arms"; "they are not to quit their arms till one hour after sunset, when they are to be sent to their huts and sentries placed round the camp. . . ." This was to be continued day after day, and the men were to stand by their arms from sunrise to sunset until the plunderers were discovered. Marauding was Wellington's *bête noir*, to be checked by every possible means. General officers were often desired to hold unexpected kit inspections at the end of the day's march, when "everything not strictly regimental necessaries (found in the men's packs), is to be taken from them and burnt, and those who have these articles punished, as they must certainly have been obtained by plunder."

While discipline was thus maintained with a strong hand, Wellington laboured hard to make his army effective and to improve the military qualities of his troops. No matter was too small for his supervision or correction. He could write with minute knowledge upon bill-hooks and camp-kettles, discussing seriously whether the latter should be of iron or tin; he could enlarge upon the proper packing of blankets, show how requisitions should be made out for equipment and necessaries, tents,

great-coats, supplies of all sorts; he created his commissariat out of the most unpromising materials, people "incapable of conducting any business beyond a counting-house"; his orders were precise as to the issue of bread, forage, shoes; his regulation of transport, of carts and bat mules, by far the most troublesome service throughout the war, was exactly adapted to the situation. His eye was everywhere, on all ranks, on all departments, at all times. He will not suffer "the cavalry in winter quarters to lose the habit of marching"; infantry are to be regularly exercised in the same way; the divisions were to be taken out route marching at least three leagues, and practised in manœuvres and outpost drill. He was for ever urging constant watchfulness in the presence of the enemy. Just before Talavera he ordered that "one-third of each regiment (is) to remain accoutred in the lines, and the whole must be on the alert." At such times he was most particular in his precautions for protecting his baggage and preventing stragglers. The last were his peculiar aversion; he would not tolerate straggling on the line of march. It was "a most unmilitary practice, most inconvenient, leading to loss"; "the enemy has taken 100 British soldiers straggling in the rear and on the flanks of the army."[1]

[1] July 1812.

Many severe measures were tried to check it, but not always with success. A report of absentees was to be made nightly to the brigadier; an officer was to be sent back along the rear as far as the rear-guard to pick up men missing. Again Wellington threatens three regiments, "notorious offenders in this respect, having more stragglers than all the rest of the army," that he will send them into garrison, and report their conduct especially to his Majesty.

CHAPTER VI

A WAITING GAME

Wellington plays a waiting game—His enemies at home—The Government powerless to help him—Overpowering strength of the French—Massena's invasion—Busaco—Torres Vedras—Unfriendly critics—Massena retreats—Albuera.

WITH the withdrawal into Portugal in 1809, Wellington entered into the most trying period of his life. He was face to face with the naked truth that he must depend mainly on his own resources, and fight the French almost alone. He resolved, therefore, to develop the Portuguese army and play a waiting game. But now he was denounced by the Opposition at home, while his own friends in the Government gave him but lukewarm support, neglecting his just demands, refusing his drafts for money and more men. The bitterest language was used against him. "It is truly melancholy and alarming that Wellington should have the impertinence to think of defending Portugal with 50,000 men of whom only 20,000 are English," said one speaker in Parliament. "If the French entertain serious designs

on the country (Portugal), before three months Wellington and his army will be in England." Another declared that "the impossibility of defence is so self-evident, that to reason upon it any further would be worse than ridiculous. Before six months are over, if our troops do not escape on board ship, the only English soldiers left in the Peninsula will be prisoners." "The mere proposal to hold Portugal is the climax of error." Lord Grenville declared "upon his conscience" that he did not believe the whole British army could secure that kingdom, and "any one who said it was unfit to govern. . . . We could only retain Portugal so long as Bonaparte permitted." Nothing could save the situation, thought Lord Holland, but "a great plan."

In truth this great plan had already taken shape in Wellington's brain, as we shall presently see; but he religiously guarded the secret. Meanwhile the timid Government he served could only urge him to be prudent, to run no risks; they were "powerless to help him." Now, indeed, a storm was gathering in the near horizon, dark enough to daunt any but the most fearless spirit. Peace in Central Europe had set free Napoleon's legions, and he was at liberty to concentrate an enormous force in Spain for the expulsion of the English and the

complete subjugation of the Peninsula. By the middle of the year 1810 the French in Spain numbered 366,000, under the most famous French generals. Soult was to be launched against the rich province of Andalucia. Massena, "the spoiled child of victory," the most capable opponent Wellington encountered in the Peninsula, was to invade Portugal. He was to command three army corps, those of Ney, Regnier, and Junot, 80,000 men all told; while King Joseph with a reserve of 24,000 stood behind in Madrid.

Massena was to move from Salamanca and operate by the line of the Douro. At this time Wellington's army was posted to watch the northern approaches into Portugal. He held his main strength along the Mondego, with Craufurd's light division across the Coa, in near touch with the French outposts under Ney. Hill was in the valley of the Tagus, opposite Regnier; and, farther to the south, Beresford and his Portuguese covered the fertile district of the Alemtejo. Wellington had already "matured his plan"; it was designed on lines that would have surprised Lord Holland, and was far greater than any but a military genius could have conceived. Its cardinal features were to give ground slowly before Massena, while the Portuguese peasantry, as he retreated, laid their

lands waste and denied the enemy subsistence. At a given point Wellington would disappear behind the hills, passing within the impregnable barrier of Torres Vedras, the great lines of earthworks created by his own foresight as a secure citadel and last stronghold to stay the advancing tide of invasion.

The movements of both armies were slow and circumspect. Massena advanced in June, and Ney invested Ciudad Rodrigo; and Craufurd maintaining himself too long upon the Coa with the rearguard, was nearly compromised. Wellington let Ciudad Rodrigo surrender. He could not risk failure in the attempt to succour it; defeat would have brought on another Corunna, and he fell back behind the Mondego River, where, skilfully drawing all his strength towards him, he prepared to give battle. He has been blamed for fighting at Busaco. Napier condemns the battle, which "in a military point of view should not have been fought. It was extraneous to his (Wellington's) original plan, and forced upon him by events; it was in fine a political battle, and he afterwards called it a mistake. . . . His mixed and inexperienced army was not easily handled. War is full of mischances, and the loss of a single brigade might have caused the English Government to abandon

the contest altogether." At the time Wellington did not admit his error. "The croakers about useless battles will attack me again about that of Busaco," Wellington wrote a week after the battle, "notwithstanding that our loss was really trifling; but I should have been inexcusable if, knowing what I did, I had not endeavoured to stop the enemy there. . . . It has removed an impression which began to be very general, that we intended to fight no more, but retire to our ships; it has given the Portuguese a taste for an amusement to which they were not before accustomed, and which they would not have acquired if I had not put them in a very strong position."

Massena came on leisurely, feeling sorely the already scant supplies of food and forage, while the Portuguese irregulars closed in on his rear, cutting him from his base, and greatly harassing his communications. His direction was Coimbra and the roads leading upon Lisbon. On the 25th September Ney with the advanced guard came up on the Sierra de Busaco, which was the position Wellington had selected as best suited for a defensive action. Hill, hurrying up from the Tagus, had rejoined him, and he had thus gathered together all his strength. But when impetuous Ney dashed up, the long precipitous hill of Busaco

was not yet fully occupied, and if the French had attacked instantly, the issue might have been different. Massena would not consent till he was himself at the front, and the golden opportunity was lost. On the 26th Wellington carefully lined the position with his troops, and the battle was fought on the 27th. Ney (no longer sanguine of success) commanded the left, Regnier the right; Junot was in reserve. Regnier broke in manfully between the divisions of Picton and Leith, and was only checked by the prompt intervention of Wellington, who brought two guns to bear upon the French flank, and sent on two fresh regiments to charge. Regnier fought strenuously, but could not withstand their furious onslaught; he had no reserves, and presently fell back, beaten. Ney was also foiled on the left.

Massena now learnt that he might turn the position he could not force. Utilising a little-known mountain path to his own right, he continued his advance, and Wellington abandoned Busaco. Massena was very confident of success. Many of his officers believed that the English were in full retreat, making in hot haste for their ships; that re-embarkation was inevitable. There is no more dramatic surprise in the whole annals of war than the check which Massena now received. For under

his very eyes the English columns glided through the passes of the frowning hills, entering a great natural fortress rendered impregnable by the highest engineering skill, and, so to speak, shut the gate behind them. The celebrated lines of Torres Vedras, says Napier, "were great in conception and execution, more in keeping with ancient than modern military labours."

We have no very exact knowledge when the idea struck Wellington, but it was probably of gradual growth, arising first in his general dispositions for the defence of Portugal, and taking definite shape as he considered each point in turn. All this is to be seen in his elaborate and masterly memorandum to Colonel Fletcher, his chief engineer officer, dated October 20, 1809. He there considers the principal aims and objects of the enemy, and discusses the best measures for encountering them. The French, seeking to obtain Lisbon, would naturally advance by the right or left, or both; by either the north or south bank of the Tagus, or by both banks. The river itself would be the best barrier against the latter, and to meet the former he thought it possible to organise a system of strong defensive works in the mountainous country about Torres Vedras, which (having made a detailed reconnaissance and visited every part of the ground)

he saw, with the unerring instinct of a great soldier, was admirably adapted to the purpose. Having arrived at this conclusion, he proceeds to describe minutely how and where the fortifications should be constructed. The technical knowledge herein displayed is remarkable; the extraordinary eye for country, the exact application of means for working parties, the numbers for which the works should be designed, the armament to cover and command the approaches—all these are detailed with the profound skill of a practical engineer.

Second only to the sagacity that created them was the self-control that kept this marvellous plan a profound secret to the last. That works were being thrown up could not of course be concealed; there were thousands and thousands of Portuguese labourers employed upon them under a crowd of subordinate officers, yet no whisper of their transcendent importance, no suspicion of the momentous part they were to play, got abroad. Wellington visited them often;[1] he watched over their construction with a jealous, vigilant eye, yet no one fathomed his intentions. Neither in his own army, among his most trusted staff-officers, nor in the country at large,

[1] February 1, 1810, he met Fletcher on the ground to deal with various difficulties. The day before he had sent home an urgent request for more engineer officers.

was there the slightest idea that twelve months beforehand he was slowly preparing a gigantic obstacle to the victorious advance of the French. How extreme was Massena's surprise, how bitter his disappointment, may be gathered from his indignant reproof to the Portuguese officers in his camp. They had assured him that the country lay open between the Mondego and the capital; that there was no naturally strong position; that if one had been created artificially, he should have found it out himself through his spies. "Yes, yes," retorted Massena, "Wellington built the works, but he did not make the mountains."

The security afforded by these tremendous lines was not immediately appreciated by those they sheltered. The defensive system was in a triple line; had the first been stormed there was the second and still the third; they were all armed with heavy guns manned by many troops, reinforced by marines and bluejackets from the fleet. With his Spanish and Portuguese allies Wellington's garrison now reached the respectable total of 130,000 men. Yet few, if any, believed in Wellington's plan. His camp was full of traitors who pandered to the ignoble hatred of his detractors at home. Through the long winter, with unshaken fortitude, Wellington stood steadfastly on the defensive, deaf to the

unstinting abuse of those who called him incapable, timorous, nothing better than a coward. The English press at home was filled with the contemptuous complaints of his own officers. He chafed bitterly at the hostile correspondence maintained by these ignorant critics, but he was not to be shaken in his purpose. One of the worst was a man at his right hand, Charles Stewart, his adjutant-general, brother to Lord Castlereagh, his patron and friend. Wellington made short work of Stewart, and when he had plainly convicted him of underhand communication, he gave him to understand that unless he desisted he should be sent straight home.

The English general at this time had not only to complain of unfriendly criticism, but he had to deal with the dangerous and unguarded utterances of many officers who in their letters home gave much information to the enemy. "All this would not much signify," he declares, "if our staff and other officers would mind their business, instead of writing news and keeping coffee-houses. But as soon as an accident happens, every man who can write, and who has a friend who can read, sits down to write his account of what he does not know, and his comments on what he does not understand; and these are diligently circulated and

exaggerated by the idle and malicious, of whom there are plenty in all armies." The evil resisted treatment, the most scathing general orders. "It is a fact, come to the knowledge of the commander of the forces, that the plans of the enemy have been founded on information extracted from the English newspapers, which information must have been obtained through private letters from officers of the army." Again he gives his general opinion that "We are the most indefatigable writers of letters and of news that exist in the world, and the fashion and spirit of the times gives encouragement to lies."

However, as the year 1810 drew to its close, through the succeeding winter, and well into the spring, the profound wisdom of Wellington's defensive system was brought home convincingly to the most sceptical. The allied army, safe behind the entrenchments, lived in comfort, while Massena starved outside. For once the British commissariat worked well: supplies were plentiful; the army was in close touch with England over sea. While this long period of leisure was fully occupied in developing military efficiency, in constant drills, marches, and manœuvres, the sports and games so dear to Englishmen were constantly pursued; new arrivals who now landed, fearing to find no army,

were astonished to be welcomed by friends in good case, and who, for all their discontented grumblings, began to see that Wellington was right.

Meanwhile Massena held his ground with extraordinary tenacity, undismayed by the horrible sufferings of his troops, in an enemy's country wasted and depopulated by famine, fire, and the sword. By the 1st of March he had lost a third of his numbers; it was indeed a marvel that his army still existed. It was said that the French had subsisted all those months in a country that would not have fed a British brigade. Years afterwards, when Massena met Wellington in Paris, he told him how much he had suffered in this terrible time. "Ah! Monsieur le Maréchal," he said, "que vous m'avez fait passer des mauvais moments!" and he assured his great antagonist that he had not left him one black hair on his whole body.

Massena's retreat before Wellington is generally counted one of his finest operations, conducted as it was through an inhospitable country, with an alert and enterprising foe at his heels—for Wellington was soon able to prove that he could strike as well as stand upon his guard. Massena, "the cunning old fox," as Wellington called him, fell back fighting, and having more than once changed the direction of his retreat, finally recrossed the frontier

into Spain just three weeks later, having lost from first to last 30,000 men.

Warfare more or less desultory followed. Two subsidiary battles were fought in the south, Barrosa and Albuera.[1] Wellington laid siege to Badajoz, but it was relieved by Soult, to be again besieged without success by Beresford the same year. Meanwhile Massena made a last essay to restore his fortunes, and being bent upon relieving Almeida, fought and lost the battle of Fuentes d'Onoro. This closed Massena's career; he was recalled to Paris, and never fought again for the master who was always intolerant of non-success. Yet the last battle (Fuentes d'Onoro) was by no means a defeat. It was so close a thing that Wellington himself believed the English would have been beaten if Napoleon, not Massena, had commanded the French. "We had nearly three to one against us engaged—about four to one of cavalry; and, moreover, our cavalry had not a gallop in them, while some of the enemy's were fresh and in excellent order." In telling the story at his own table, a couple of years later, he admitted that he had made one great mistake in this battle—he had over-extended his right; and said that had the French taken advantage of it, the consequences

[1] See under head of Graham and Beresford.

might have been serious; "but they permitted him to recover himself and to change front before their face."[1]

The final expulsion of the French from Portugal greatly improved Wellington's position at home. The Government saw now, with his eyes, that the Peninsula was the true arena of contest, and they were no more to be led away into vain adventure on other theatres of war. The lesson of Walcheren had been a bitter and disastrous experience; a capable commander was not to be starved for means that they should be wasted elsewhere. Wellington was accordingly promised reinforcements; he was permitted to accept the supreme command of the Spanish armies, and otherwise encouraged. Still his difficulties at the seat of war were not greatly diminished; he was kept very short of cash, the Portuguese at his elbow always gave endless trouble, and Marmont, who had replaced Massena, did not mean to remain idle. The main object of the French was to raise the siege of Badajoz, which Wellington had resumed. Soult, co-operating from Andalucia, attacked Beresford before he could be reinforced, and the magnificent battle of Albuera was fought, the bloodiest and most desperate ever won by our unconquerable troops. Marmont and

[1] Larpent, 65.

Soult now combined, and Wellington, leaving Badajoz, faced them undaunted with inferior forces, which yet imposed sufficiently on a gallant enemy too frequently worsted of late to enter willingly upon a fresh encounter.

No active operations of a serious kind marked the last half of this year. Wellington and Marmont watched each other closely. The English commander, ever keen to secure one or both of the great fortresses that must form his base for any offensive campaign, laid siege to Ciudad Rodrigo. Marmont, who was numerically stronger at the decisive points, frustrated every endeavour, succoured the place when in its direst extremity, fought many serious combats that might easily have expanded into great battles. In the fall of the year both the opposing armies went into winter quarters, but Marmont first renewed the garrison of Ciudad Rodrigo, and Wellington continued to observe it.

CHAPTER VII

THE TURNING TIDE

New plans—Fall of Ciudad Rodrigo and of Badajoz—Salamanca—Burgos besieged, and retreat therefrom—Results of campaign of 1812.

WITH 1812 the war entered upon a new stage—the last, as it may be called, of Wellington's probation. It was a season of great triumphs, of strongholds captured and victories won; if failure closed the year, it was absolved by a masterly retreat, that most difficult of all operations, and now at last clamour was silenced and his reputation securely established.

Yet 1812 dawned with no great promise. Wellington's prolonged inactivity was again causing the keenest dissatisfaction in the public mind at home. It was essential to perform some feat of arms, to win some advantage soon, and he quietly cast about him calculating the comparative cost of each. Among the various enterprises that offered, one by its very audacity seemed the most hopeless and impossible, and that was the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo by a *coup de main.* His army seemed

quite unequal to it. The health of the troops was indifferent, great numbers were in hospital; never before had supplies been so scarce; the men, in their ragged uniforms, with pay months in arrears, were continually on half rations, for days without bread; all animals, artillery and cavalry horses, the mules of the transport trains, were half starved.

These undoubted facts were fully known to Marmont, and lulled him into false security; he could not believe the English general, beset with such innumerable troubles, would dare assume the offensive. Wellington, on the other hand, correctly judging Marmont's mind, was the more encouraged to act. He resolved to fall upon Ciudad Rodrigo, hoping to carry it by a *coup de main* before the enemy, widely disseminated in search of subsistence, could gather together to raise the siege. He laid his plans with consummate secrecy and astuteness. A battering train was collected at Almeida with the excuse of re-arming that fortress; large parties of infantry were trained in the business of military engineering. A strong trestle-bridge was prepared for the passage of the river Agueda, upon which the fortress stands. When all was ready, at the moment when least expected, in the depth of winter, the most unlikely and unsuitable season, he swooped down on the fortress.

The siege and capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, an affair completed between the 8th and the 19th of January, was a magnificent achievement, one of the most brilliant exploits performed by Wellington's army. It is "the only well-authenticated example of a breach, retrenched and well supplied with men, being carried by an effort of cool but determined courage against a brave and skilful enemy."[1] The assault was delivered prematurely. Time was of such vital importance, Marmont was so near, that the place must be taken before bombardment had opened a sufficient breach. What Wellington expected even at a terrible sacrifice of life, his soldiers unhesitatingly accomplished.

Badajoz, the second of the Spanish frontier gates, was next attempted, and Wellington sat down before it upon the 9th of March. On the 16th the siege was begun by Picton with three divisions, 15,000 men, while Hill with 30,000 more covered the operation against Soult. Philippon, one of the most chivalrous and dauntless of Frenchmen, held the place with a garrison of only 5000; but their gallantry, backed by his engineering skill, made up for paucity of numbers. Here again time was the essence of the situation. Strict rules of procedure must be set aside, whatever the cost. The plan

[1] Jones, "Sieges in Spain."

adopted was never approved by those who formed and carried it out; but it was a matter of necessity, "because no means were at hand to execute a better."

Eighteen hundred men worked in the trenches knee deep in mud. On the 25th March the bombardment opened; two great outworks were silenced, and so seriously damaged that they were captured by assault that same night. Next day new parallels were traced, more batteries prepared; but now Marmont was reported as threatening Ciudad Rodrigo, and Soult was rapidly approaching from Seville. The latter had reached Llerena on the 5th, and next day Wellington made his assault. It was neck or nothing; he could not afford to wait; if Badajoz was not taken at once, he must retire. Four principal columns went up to the attack; that at the breaches failed; prodigies of valour were unavailing against the stubborn resistance. Had not Picton carried the castle by escalade, and the 5th Division seized the St. Vincent bastion, the day must have gone against us. But these successes pierced Philippon's defence, and ere long he surrendered with his garrison. Although dearly bought, the possession of these two fortresses was a splendid prize, for Ciudad Rodrigo gave Wellington a strategical

advantage, the benefits of which he was not slow to gather.

He was now able to choose whether he would move to the southward against Soult, attack Marmont, who was based on Salamanca, or operate against Joseph in Madrid. He decided on the second, hoping that success against Marmont would free the capital. The campaign of Salamanca which followed is admirably calculated to show Wellington at his best and worst. His worst, because he was undoubtedly outmanœuvred by Marmont, who, although not a really great commander, showed himself the English general's tactical superior. His best, because he owed his ultimate success to unerring promptitude in dealing with a flagrant tactical error. When his adversary rashly extended himself, thinking to gain an easy victory over an army in full retreat, Wellington delivered the great counter-stroke, with the happy result of "beating forty thousand men in forty minutes." Yet even here the battle was long in doubt, and was gained by the English general because he had the strongest reserves. It should have been more decisive, however, and the whole of the beaten army must have surrendered had not a careless and disobedient Spanish leader neglected to hold an important post upon the river Tormes.

G. Daw, pinx. *Art Reproduction Co., sc.*

GENERAL ALAVA.

Salamanca, according to the historian, may be considered Wellington's most skilful battle: "Assaye was more wonderful, Waterloo more glorious, but at Salamanca he dominated the field with the mastery of a practised hand."

This success opened the way to the capital, and, amid the rejoicings of the inhabitants, Wellington marched forward. The French were disorganised, and everywhere in full retreat. Clausel, now commanding Marmont's army, had drawn back behind Burgos; Joseph had evacuated Madrid, and was making for the east coast to combine with Suchet; Soult's communications were imperilled, and he was obliged to abandon Andalucia.

Campaign of Burgos.

12*th Aug.* Wellington entered Madrid, where he captured a whole arsenal of stores. In this the heart and centre of Spain, he could plan his next movements and decide whether to move against Clausel, Suchet, or Soult. The French had rallied, and were making fresh head. He himself was in greater difficulties, suffering more than ever from the neglect of the Home Government and the supineness of his Spanish allies. "We are absolutely bankrupt," he writes. "The troops are now five

months in arrears, instead of being five months in advance. The staff have not been paid since February, the muleteers not since June 1811; and we are in debt in all parts of the country. I am obliged to take the money sent to me by my brother for the Spaniards, to give my own troops a fortnight's pay, who are really suffering for want of money." He was in sore need of everything, remounts for cavalry and artillery, and especially commissariat supplies. It was no doubt with the wish to establish a new base on the Biscayan coast,[1] and a shorter line of operations, that he now resolved to attack Burgos. With that strong place in his possession he could abandon Portugal, and securing thus a nearer communication with home, he would also eat like a gangrene into the flank of the French line of retreat.

19*th Sept.* The siege of Burgos was begun with insufficient means—a very meagre battering train, three 18 and five 24 pounders — and the work in the trenches was entrusted largely to the Portuguese. A first assault failed, and was followed with despondency; a second assault was only partially successful; three others failed to give Wellington possession of the place. The weather became horribly inclement, and added greatly to the

[1] Accomplished the following year.

discomfort and hopelessness of the besiegers, whose numbers diminished daily by sickness. Wellington was short of all kinds of siege material, he could bring up no reinforcements, and now he learnt that Soult had combined with Joseph; the French had concentrated from the east and south, while those in his front were prepared to resume the offensive. Retreat became inevitable.

21*st Oct.* Wellington broke up from his lines before Burgos, choosing the most direct route, which led his columns right under the guns of the castle. He moved with the utmost secrecy, marching in silence, his gun wheels muffled in straw, and managed so well that only his rear-guard was fired upon.

23*rd Oct.* He had retired to the Pisuerga; and

24*th Oct.* To the Carrion.

29*th Oct.* He was behind the Douro. The French crossed lower down, at Tordesillas, and made Wellington's position untenable; but he moved to his left and forbade their passage in any force.

Meanwhile Hill had stood fast at Madrid, still showing a bold front against Soult, Joseph, and Suchet, who were converging upon him; but

30*th Oct.* He commenced to withdraw through the passes of the Guadarrama to rejoin Wellington,

the French following on his footsteps, but not in great strength.

8th Nov. He reached the Tormes, and was in touch with Wellington at Salamanca. The combined British forces now numbered 68,000. The French also had concentrated, Soult and his comrade marshals having stretched a hand northward and joining with Wellington's pursuers; their united forces were 90,000 strong.

14th Nov. Soult moved forward, and would have attacked Wellington had he held his ground, but the English general prudently withdrew in the face of superior numbers. His retreat was accomplished by an audacious march, under cover of fog and rain, round the enemy's left, by which he secured the roads on Ciudad Rodrigo.

19th Nov. The whole army was behind the Agueda, and under cover of the Portuguese frontier.

Thus the brilliant successes of the early part of the year ended in this masterly but disastrous retreat. It was an operation to try hard the fortitude and self-reliance of the greatest commander, and never was Wellington's coolness, self-possession, and adroitness more admirably displayed. The army was only saved by his firmness from degenerating into a rabble rout. The bonds of discipline

had been sadly relaxed in retreat; everything contributed to demoralise the troops—short rations, the insufficiency of transport, persistently inclement weather. Men broke out into licence and rapine; drunkenness, outrage, insubordination were terribly rife, and could not be checked even by the strong hand. Wellington in bitter language blamed his officers; they retorted, and openly blamed their superiors. Much hardship and inconvenience were entailed by the mistakes of the overworked staff: there was no nice calculation of movements; divisions and regiments moved too soon or too late, were halted for hours exposed to furious rains; they struggled on ankle-deep in mud, often barefoot, always soaked to the skin; they were left to bivouac in swampy ground starved with hunger, or were roused at midnight to receive rations they could not cook. It was a repetition, intensified, of the retreat upon Corunna, and the total loss was little less than 9000 men with much baggage.

Not strangely, this retreat, with all its sufferings and failures, tried Wellington's blossoming reputation hard. There was a fresh outburst of discontent in England; Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz, and Salamanca were already forgotten. The cry that Wellington was incompetent was again raised, but he found friends now with the Opposition, which

felt it convenient to attack the Government for not supplying him with adequate means. Happily the right triumphed. The blame fell upon those who merited it. Wellington was further advanced in rank, and during the winter he received reinforcements and supplies to enable him to recommence operations under better auspices in the spring. He himself spoke modestly of his achievements in 1812. "Although we have not been able to hold the two Castilles," he wrote, "our campaign has not been a bad one, and we are in a position to make a good one next year." Napier goes further, and declares that "this campaign, including the sieges of Rodrigo, Badajoz, the forts of Salamanca, and of Burgos, the assault of Almaraz and the fight of Salamanca, will probably be considered his finest illustration of the art of war."

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAN, WELLINGTON

Wellington's burthen—His crosses and difficulties—His breadth of grasp—His self-confidence, sense of duty, untiring energy—Exacts implicit obedience from all—Full of resource—Has two sets of staff-officers—His personal vanity—His physical strength and powers of endurance.

IT will be well to pause here for a moment to get some idea of Wellington as a man, of his personal attributes, to consider the many fine qualities in his complex character. He was now nearing the climax of his reputation as a great commander; he had conquered the esteem of his enemies, was respected and feared by the chivalrous foe in front of him, and was rising superior to scurrilous calumny and backbiting at home. He had earned the most unbounded confidence, and was assured of the most strenuous support from the men he had so often led to victory. There is no more striking picture in our national records than that of Wellington as he bore with uncomplaining fortitude the immense burthen laid upon him in the Peninsular war. He was then, in truth, that "sight for the gods," a great man struggling with adversity.

The difficulties, constant and continually varied, of his daily life can hardly be exaggerated. Any who, through forgetfulness or incomplete knowledge, might be disposed in these latter days to belittle his achievements, should be reminded of what he did, and how he did it. He carried everything on his own shoulders. We have seen something of his crosses, in regard to the neglect of the Home Government, the excesses of his troops, the faithlessness and uselessness of his allies. Worse than all was the incompetence of so many of his subordinates; he complained bitterly at times of the ignorance and inefficiency of his lieutenants, and repeatedly reported the facts home, deploring the trouble he had in making them understand the objects he had in view, even in obeying the orders he gave. "It is to be hoped," he writes to Lord Liverpool, "that general and other officers will at last acquire the experience that will teach them that success can only be attained by attention to the most minute details, by tracing every part of every operation to its conclusion point by point, and ascertaining that the whole is understood by those who mean to execute it." How sometimes his brigadiers disappointed him is told in the story of the one who, having committed a flagrant mistake, made the excuse that his eyesight was defective.

The Duke (then Lord Wellington) asked his age. "Forty-four," was the reply. "Oh," said his chief contemptuously, who was at that time forty-one, "you will be a great soldier when you are as old as I am." It must be remembered that in those days no really good and practical school to form the superior officers had existed, India alone excepted. No English army had made a really serious war on large lines upon the Continent of Europe since the days of Marlborough. But it was out of these unpromising materials that some of the best modern English generals, after Wellington, were made. Such men as Beresford, Hill, Graham, Picton, Cole, Colville, Clinton, Byng, Beckwith, Colborne, and many more, came well through the ordeal of tested efficiency in the field.

A leader often so badly served by many of his lieutenants was not likely to seek their advice, nor be greatly guided by their opinion. But it was peculiarly characteristic of Wellington that he never appealed to others, never summoned councils of war to give him their confidence and support. He elicited the fullest information, and for this purpose regularly gathered together staff and heads of departments, listening patiently to all. When he had heard, weighed, assimilated everything, he made up his own mind, acting according to

his lights, on his own judgment alone. Then, he planned his instructions himself, often most minutely, issued his own orders, and expected them to be implicitly obeyed. But his decision was final, and he imposed his will authoritatively on the rest. It was this that gave him such a commanding influence on all about him; he was in truth the master, the real supreme chief, to whom all looked, on whom all depended. This concentration of will and authority in one single individual is no doubt a necessity to secure success in war; nevertheless, when carried to its furthest limits, it undoubtedly tends to dwarf and discourage, and while checking independence in thought and action, will frequently develop mediocrity.

Nothing was too intricate, too small for his personal attention. It has been said of his despatches that they exhibit in a marked degree his extraordinary breadth of grasp. "You might have fancied the writer of one letter to have been bred in a merchant's counting-house, of another that he was a *commissaire de guerre*, or a profound diplomatist, or a financier, or a jurist." The day before the commencement of most important field operations, with a mass of most intricate military details on his hands, he wrote two sheets of foolscap, in his own hand, to Sir James M'Grigor, on

a disputed question of medical administration, explaining at length his reasons for differing with his principal medical officer. Then Wellington invariably saw personally to the execution of his own designs and plans. He kept all the lines in his own hands; he liked to look into everything, to superintend the execution of everything for himself. "I am obliged to be everywhere; if absent from any operation, something goes wrong." This feeling was no doubt partly due to his distrust of so many of his agents; it was, of course, encouraged by his own almost unbounded self-confidence; still, it had its chief seat in the strong sense of duty that governed all his public actions. From first to last he was the "mimmuck wallah," as he called himself—the man who had "eaten the king's salt," and who must give his utmost loyal endeavour to any task entrusted to him.

To say that Wellington never trusted any of his staff or those about him is not exactly correct. When he found a good man he was glad enough to utilise him to the full. Such were, however, the bright exceptions, and for the most part not those appointed from home, but those whom he discovered and brought forward himself, generally from the junior ranks. For, in his own words, he believed "the young ones will always beat the old

ones," not a new or singular opinion; but he usually qualified the dictum by adding that this was more particularly the case when the old were "without experience." But for his own keen discrimination in choosing out and advancing the most competent men he could find, his difficulties would have been enormously increased.

It was an ever-rankling grievance with him that the Horse Guards authorities made so many bad appointments to his staff.[1] Another sore point was his powerlessness to reward meritorious service. He could give the capable extended responsibilities, larger command, greater opportunity, but not promotion. It has been well said, in comparing the means at the disposal of the two great leaders of those days, Napoleon and Wellington, that the English general could not promote a corporal, while the French emperor could make a duke, and by a mere stroke of his pen. At a time only immediately antecedent to the Peninsular war, English commanders in the field had possessed great patronage; most of the generals of the day had been rapidly advanced by such chiefs as Howe, Clinton, Cornwallis, Burgoyne, Dorchester; but this power of giving promotion on active service had lately been abolished, and, as a natural

[1] See post, p. 163—Waterloo.

consequence, Wellington was unable to incite officers to their best efforts. "We who command the armies of the country, and are expected to make exertions greater than those made by the French, . . . have not the power of rewarding or promising a reward for a single officer of the army," we find it stated in a letter to Lord Castlereagh. "It may be supposed that I wish for this patronage to gratify my own favourites; but I declare most solemnly that if I had it to-morrow, there is not a soul in the army whom I would wish to promote excepting for services performed. I would not give one pin to have the disposal of every commission in the army." But he insists upon the necessity for a change in the system: "It is not known to the army and to strangers, and I am almost ashamed of acknowledging, the small degree (I ought to say nullity) of power of reward which belongs to my situation; and it is really extraordinary that I have got on so well hitherto without it. But the day must come when this system must be altered." It has not yet arrived, although this prediction is nearly a century old;[1] and although a successful commander

[1] An instance of this, not a singular one, was that of Ensign Dyas, of the 15th Regiment, who *twice* volunteered to lead storming parties on the outwork of San Cristoval at the first siege of Badajoz in 1811. His name was mentioned in despatches, and Lord Wellington recommended him for promotion; yet he never obtained it till after the return of the army from the Peninsula

in the field can recommend a good officer for promotion, he can do no more.

No doubt Wellington had his own good reasons for distrusting his staff, but he carried it to a questionable extreme. He relied so entirely upon himself, that he would permit no one to make suggestions, still less to take action, even in the smallest matters, without his authority. To question his orders, to hesitate to obey them, to traverse or impede them, was with him the great and unpardonable sin. He never forgave insubordination, or the faintest indication of it. This explains his implacable resentment against Norman Ramsay, the most gallant of horse-artillerymen,[1] whose guilt in this respect was never clearly proved, but whom Wellington unsparingly condemned. It was this that went near causing a breach between him and his principal medical officer, Sir James M'Grigor, with whom, recognising his true worth, he had hitherto been on the best of terms. The state of the sick and wounded after Salamanca was so deplorable that M'Grigor had taken upon himself to order up

in 1814, and then only by an accidental meeting with an influential person, the late Sir Frederick Ponsonby, who once more brought his services before the Horse Guards. Besides neglect or forgetfulness, there existed much jealousy of recommendations which interfered with home patronage.

[1] See post, p. 227.

commissariat officers and purveyors, and to take other measures for their relief. Wellington was furious. "I should like to know who is to command the army? I or you? I establish one route, one line of communication for the army; you establish another, and order the commissariat and supplies by that line. As long as you live, sir, never do so again; never do anything without my orders."

M'Grigor pleaded that there was no time to consult him to save life. Wellington repeated peremptorily that nothing must be done without his orders. Even later on, in the retreat from Madrid, when the excellence of M'Grigor's arrangements greatly simplified Wellington's task, the autocratic chief would not yield on the point of duty. Wellington would only admit that it had all turned out very well; "but I recommend you, still, to have my orders for what you are to do." No wonder this imperious spirit made him a terror to his staff. Whether "his lordship" was or was not in a good temper was anxiously debated at each morning's levee. There were times indeed when, things having gone wrong, he gave way to his ill-humour and snubbed them all unmercifully. At others a child, so to speak, might play with him. There were ways of doing business that pleased him, others that offended him mightily. He could not

tolerate diffuseness or hesitation in speech ; a man must go straight to the point with him, short and sharp, or expect to hear about it. "He could not bear a roundabout story. Conciseness, alacrity, and energy were the elements in which he lived. He liked all that was to be done or said brought to a point closely and quickly."[1]

He judged people very much by their way in putting things before him, expecting prompt replies to his questions, off-hand, without notes.[2] Sir James M'Grigor tells us that he found Wellington "disliked my coming to him with a written paper ; he was fidgety and evidently displeased when I referred to my notes." Another *bête noir* was the making of difficulties : "Never let me hear of them about anything." He wished to banish such words as "difficulty," "responsibility," from his vocabulary. He was so full of ingenuity and resource himself, that he expected others to be the same. He conquered everything by his ready adaptability of the circumstances as he found them to the ends he had in view. "No scaling-ladders for Ciudad Rodrigo? Saw up the waggons of the transport ; they have done their work." "Want planking? Use up the platforms of your siege

[1] Larpent.

[2] *Cf.* Kinglake and the Duke's approval of Airey.

batteries, and make fresh platforms when you get to the pinewoods of Bayonne." These were his brief solutions of stiff problems that puzzled others.

For a long time he was especially dissatisfied with, possibly a little hard upon, the artillery and its senior officers. He thought them slow and inert, and told them so. "I took care to let him feel that I thought him very stupid," was his remark upon one artillery commander who had come under his displeasure. "And I have no doubt he said it in very plain terms," was the subsequent comment of Murray, the quartermaster-general, who had heard Wellington's remark. This same artillery officer was again in trouble when having an audience with the commander of the forces about some friend's case. Wellington became exasperated, and told the colonel that his friend might go to a certain warm place. "Very good, sir; then I'll go to the quartermaster-general for a route," retorted the old chap; and Wellington, who really loved a joke, laughed heartily. Few could tell a good story better, few enjoyed one more. Rogers, in his "Recollections," records that the Duke had great gaiety of mind. "He laughs at almost everything if it serves to divert him. . . . His laugh is easily excited, and it is very loud and

long, like the whoop of a whooping-cough often repeated." No doubt Wellington had his weak moments — one in particular, when waiting for his horse to mount and go out with the hounds. Astute generals and staff-officers would come to him then, when he was in high good-humour, and get through their business, much to their own satisfaction. Others would range up alongside him in the run, and get him to decide things in a hasty way, "in a way I did not always intend," but which they were prompt to adopt if it suited them. At last Wellington would have no more of it, and, with one of the strong expressions he no doubt learnt in Flanders, he gave it out that he would never talk on business when in the hunting-field.

Before leaving the subject of his Peninsular staff, it is well to record in this place a curious fact regarding it. He had always two distinct sets of staff-officers—one, so to speak, for use, the other for show, or, more exactly, for companionship in private life. With the first he was strictly their general commanding, with the second he was a more or less "off duty" comrade and good friend. He chose his personal staff mostly from his own class, following that decided bias towards aristocratic connection to which I have already referred. His aides-de-camp were generally titled youngsters

whom he called by their Christian names, who sat round his table and amused him with the gossip of society at home, and helped him in that hospitable entertainment for which the Duke was so justly famous in Spain. No one was more liberal in that respect, and he was no doubt proud of it. "You will get a better dinner with me," he said on one occasion when a guest he had invited refused, pleading a prior engagement with another subordinate general.

Yet there was no "swagger," as we should call it, no pretension about Wellington, even when generalissimo of a fine and victorious army. He did not care for the show and glitter, the pomp and circumstance of his rank; a single aide-de-camp only accompanied him in his rides or in the presence of the enemy—so much so, that he often ventured almost within their lines unsuspected, for the French could not suppose that so great a general would ride about with only one or two attendants. In quarters there was a marked simplicity in his *entourage*. Once, in France, a great local authority who wished to call on him found that he could enter his room without ceremony, and that he was seated there alone. "Marshal Soult," said the Frenchman, "would have had, at least, a general officer in waiting in the ante-chamber,

and a host of aides and orderly officers outside the door."

With all his simplicity so far as his surroundings went, Wellington was not without a certain amount of personal vanity. Although by no means a handsome man, he thought a good deal of his outward appearance, and was always extremely natty and particular about his dress. Larpent tells us of the chief's fondness for well-fitting breeches and well-made hessians or hunting-boots. There was a strain of vanity, too, in his using a distinctive costume with the hounds, which he followed in the Peninsula on every possible opportunity (the army, it will be remembered, had a couple of packs—one Wellington's, one which became in after years the nucleus of the well-known Calpe Hunt at Gibraltar). The Duke (or Lord Wellington, or "the Peer," as he then was generally termed) was in the dress of the Hampshire Hunt, at that time pale blue with a black cape; a very marked contrast, no doubt, to the rest of the costumes in the field. Yet, beyond liking his clothes well made, so as to show his then youthful figure to best appearance, it cannot be said that he cared for gaudy uniforms, and he was best known in the field by the plain blue coat, and, sometimes, a white overcoat and a cocked hat without feathers.

Wellington's passion for hunting was the natural craving of an active man for hard bodily exercise. No one could take more, whether for pleasure or business, or wanted it more. His office labours were incessant, but he threw them off easily, enjoyed himself thoroughly, and returned without a murmur to his desk. He could stand the heaviest strain, mental or physical. Larpent, who was his judge-advocate-general, describes him as always the most active of his whole party; prided himself on it: "he stayed at business at Frenada until half-past three, then rode full seventeen miles to Ciudad Rodrigo for dinner, . . . was in high glee, danced, stayed supper, at half-past three in the morning went back by moonlight, arrived at six, and was ready again for business at twelve." He travelled from Lisbon to Frenada, nearly two hundred miles, in five days, with relays of horses—riding the last day fifty miles between breakfast and dinner.

CHAPTER IX

MILITARY QUALITIES

Wellington personally controls everything—His military reputation now established — His demeanour in the field — Busaco, Badajoz, Salamanca, Vittoria, Burgos — His forbearance to Craufurd and others.

WELLINGTON'S hands were always full. Till Larpent joined him as judge-advocate, the general-in-chief had attended to all the court-martial work—framing charges, reading evidence, revising the proceedings. Yet in this department alone there was so much to do that Larpent was nearly fagged to death. As he writes in one of his letters: "I really scarcely know where to turn, and my fingers are quite fatigued, as well as my brains, with the arrangements and difficulties as to witnesses," &c. Lord Wellington remarked on this: "If your friends knew what was going on here, they would think you had no sinecure. And how do you suppose I was plagued when I had to do it nearly all myself?"

"Lord Wellington," says Larpent, "reads and looks into everything. He hunts almost every

other day, and then makes up for it by great diligence and instant decision on the intermediate days. He works until about 4 P.M., and then for an hour or two parades, with any one he wants to talk to, up and down the square of Frenada (amidst all the chattering Portuguese) in his grey coat." He knew each man's work, and could insist on its being properly done; he controlled the medical department, now grown to consist of 700 doctors under Dr. M'Grigor; the quartermaster-general, Murray,[1] "one of the best heads in the army," took his orders direct from Wellington on all the intricacies of routes and movements, and the provision of equipment; the adjutant-general, Stewart, was never safe with a chief whose eye checked every figure and instantly detected any error in the casting up of totals. Then there was the more secret and confidential business of obtaining intelligence. A whole army of agents and spies worked for him and with him, often direct, from the ubiquitous and inimitable Colquhoun Grant and the equally useful Colonel Waters, whose adventures would outdo the most ingenious romance, to the rank and file, the peasantry who came and went between the two camps and took news to both. Wellington had his spies of all

[1] "Apparently very clever and clear-headed. In my opinion he comes next to Wellington, as far as I have seen."—Larpent, 86.

ranks in Spain, and a Spanish marquesa constantly sent him valuable information from Madrid, and yet hated her country's champions as cordially as she did its French oppressors. This lady, when asked which she preferred, French or English, declared that she wished she might see the latter hanged *con las tripas* (with the intestines) of the other. Another was Dr. Curtis, an Irish priest, head of the seminary at Salamanca, who was a staunch ally, and who nearly paid the penalty with his life when the French reoccupied the place.[1]

Wellington's reputation as a military leader was now established beyond dispute. It is pictured vividly with almost photographic minuteness by contemporary writers, who do full justice to his soldierly qualities, his fortitude under adverse circumstances, his coolness and self-possession, his unwearied patience when waiting on events, many of which he had slowly prepared, his prompt unerring decision when the time for action had arrived. We may see him in every situation: harassed with doubts, tormented with difficulties, but ever sanguine, self-reliant, self-contained. At the passage of the Douro he awaits, calmly confident, the news of

[1] Dr. Curtis was subsequently titular archbishop of Dublin, and when the Duke was engaged upon the question of Catholic emancipation, was consulted by Wellington.

Murray's movement higher up, then issues the brief order, "Let the men cross"—a hazardous enterprise, the very audacity of which assured its success. At Talavera, with the strongest suspicion of Cuesta's treachery, the certain knowledge of the cowardice and incompetence of his Spanish allies, he meets the French attack quite undismayed. Wellington undoubtedly influenced the result, and may be said to have won the battle for himself; he was, as ever, at the decisive point; it was by his definite order—that of a consummate master of tactics, prescient, and therefore fully prepared to strike in—that Donellan came up with the 48th and changed the fate of the day after the rash gallantry of the Guards had jeopardised it. At Busaco, again, in the crisis of the battle, when the French with astonishing valour had climbed the heights and were securely established in the heart of our position, it was Wellington who brought up artillery to tear their flank, while the fresh infantry he had at hand drove the enemy headlong down the heights. At Fuentes d'Onoro, when, yielding to the advice of Sir Brent Spencer, he tried to hold too much ground and was in imminent peril of defeat, he saved himself by the skill and promptitude of his tactical dispositions.

An eye-witness[1] has preserved an admirable

[1] Maxwell, "Peninsular Sketches," i. 305.

picture of Wellington at the supreme moment when all seemed lost at the last assault at Badajoz. The narrator stood near him as with set face, stern, but haggard and grey with anxiety, he received the news, bad news, worse news. "My lord, I have come from the breaches," says a staff-officer, galloping up. "The troops, after repeated efforts, have failed to enter them. Colonel M'Leod, of the 43rd, is killed. So many officers have fallen, that the men are without leaders and dispersed in the ditch. Unless your lordship can send large reinforcements at once, the attack must fail." By the light of a lantern Wellington read the report; then, speaking with the utmost coolness and self-possession, said shortly, "Let Major-General Hay's brigade advance." Another interval of hideous anxiety followed, and then the scene suddenly changes.

"My lord," says one of his staff, "I hear that General Picton has obtained possession of the castle."

"Who brings the news?"

The messenger approaches.

"Are you certain, sir?" asks the anxious general.

"I entered the castle with the troops, and have only just left it. General Picton is inside," is the reply.

"With how many men?"

"His whole division."

"Return, sir, to General Picton, and desire him to retain his position at all hazards. And you"—to one of his own staff—"follow and repeat the same order."

The business had indeed been gallantly done, and there is no more splendid record of heroism than that escalade of Badajoz by Picton's division. Colonel Ridge, of the 5th, was the first to climb the ladder; he was one of the "Come on" class, and by his noble eagerness he paved the way to success. Not strangely, Wellington afterwards told Picton that the 3rd Division, in taking Badajoz, had saved his honour.

Another striking picture of him is on the field of Salamanca: a presentment in several scenes. The first on the forenoon of that great day. He had spent the early morning in moody preoccupation, for he was in the presence of a general, his equal, if not his superior, in tactics. Marmont had both outmarched and outflanked him, and on the very morning of his victory Wellington feared that his retreat into Portugal was inevitable: he had already missed more than one favourable chance of smiting his enemy; now the advantage lay with Marmont. Wellington's staff had entered a farmyard, where

a late breakfast was laid out, and Wellington, whose anxieties were too great for appetite, had been prevailed upon to munch the drumstick of a fowl. Then came an aide-de-camp with the news of Marmont's mistake—the rash overreaching extension of his left, made in the hope of intercepting Wellington's retreat, with the fatal consequences of exposing his own flank. Wellington instantly realised the great opportunity that chance had brought him, and throwing away his uneaten breakfast, he galloped off to examine Marmont's dispositions more closely.

The second scene exhibits Wellington on the hill slope calmly surveying the French columns rushing to their own destruction. It was then that he closed his telescope with supreme satisfaction and said to his Spanish attaché, "Mon cher Alava, Marmont est perdu." Then, too, when he had given his orders for the counter-stroke, for the gathering up of his divisions to attack Marmont as they caught him *en flagrant délit*, that he quietly lay down to take a short sleep. Much time must elapse before the orders just issued could be carried into effect; the advancing French must cover yet a couple of miles before they were within striking distance. Here was a spare hour to be utilised by this man of iron nerves in restoring his jaded

Gambardella. Art Reproduction Co. sc.

Duke of Wellington.

mental and physical faculties. "I shall have a little rest," he now said to his faithful Fitz Roy Somerset. "Watch the French through your glass. When they reach yonder copse, near the gap in the hills, wake me," and, wrapping himself in his cloak, lay down behind a furze bush, and was soon sound asleep. At the appointed moment he was roused, refreshed and alert for the fight. Then it was that he rode up to the 3rd Division, which was to head the onslaught, and said to his brother-in-law, Pakenham, "Do you see those fellows on the hill? Throw your division into column, Ned; at them, and drive them to the devil." And it was done so "handsomely," to use Wellington's favourite expression, that victory was assured. "Forty thousand men were beaten in forty minutes."

The third and last is from Napier's glowing pencil, and must be quoted as it stands—a splendid tribute to the leader he so devotedly served: "I saw him late in the evening of that great day, when the advancing flashes of cannon and musketry, stretching far as the eye could command, showed in the darkness how well the field was won. He was alone; the flush of victory was on his brow, and his eyes were eager and watchful, but his voice was calm, even gentle. More than the rival of Marlborough, since he had defeated greater

warriors than Marlborough ever encountered, with a prescient pride he seemed only to accept this glory as an earnest of greater things."

Look, again, at Wellington on the eve of the campaign that culminated at Vittoria. He is once more in Salamanca, and is attending high mass at the cathedral, where prayers were being offered up for the success of the allied arms. He stands, while the priest chants and the deep-toned organ plays impressive music, with his face towards the altar, attentive and absorbed, a simple figure plainly attired, a marked contrast to the gorgeous uniforms with which he is surrounded. Wellington "wore a very light grey pelisse coat, single-breasted, without a sash, a white neckerchief, with his sword buckled round his waist underneath the coat, the hilt merely protruding, with a cocked hat under his arm."

Or on the day of battle, when he chose an eminence in front of the village of Ariñez, in the very centre of his line, and made it his head-quarters during the fight, observing its progress, "and directing the movements of the divisions as calmly as if he were inspecting the movements of a review." "It is difficult to describe the perfect coolness, nay, apparent unconcern," says another eye-witness, "with which Lord Wellington gave the most important orders, directing the advance

of a division as he perceived it could act with effect. In the early part of the morning his eyes were continually directed to that part of the scene where he expected to see the head of Sir Thomas Graham's column appear." Graham's enveloping march on the left,[1] aimed at the French line of retreat by the Bayonne road, was, as will be seen,[2] a prime cause of the completeness of the victory.

Instances might be multiplied of his imperturbable coolness and self-possession. They were never more remarkable than at Fuente Guinaldo in 1811, when, to save Craufurd and enable him to make good his retreat, he held his ground with two weak divisions, isolated and unsupported, within an arm's length of Marmont's united force numbering some sixty thousand men. "It seemed the most desperate game the army had yet been called upon to play," says Vane, who was present. Yet Wellington was not dismayed. "You seem quite at your ease," said Alava to him; "why, it is enough to put any man in a fever." "I have done according to the very best of my judgment all that can be done," replied Wellington; "therefore I care not either for

[1] On another great battlefield (Waterloo) Wellington's eyes were again constantly directed to his left, the road by which he expected the Prussians.

[2] Post, p. 142.

the enemy in front, nor for anything they may say at home." A friend who paid him a visit in Spain wondered how, with all his anxieties, he could get one wink of sleep. "I throw them off with my clothes, sleep sound, and when I turn in bed I know it is time to get up."

Larpent, on the strength of Lord Aylmer, at one time adjutant-general, tells a story of Wellington's *sang froid* when, in pursuing the French, he came upon one of his divisions (Erskine's) isolated and much exposed to the front. The enemy was reported in a village close at hand, but not in any strength, and it was not until prisoners were brought in that Wellington found he had to do with the whole French army. "Oh! they are all there, are they?" was his quiet remark. "Well, we must take care what we are about, then." Again, on the same authority: Lord Aylmer reported early one morning to Wellington, just after Fuentes d'Onoro, and when a fresh attack was momentarily expected, that "the French were all off—the last cavalry mounting to be gone." Wellington was shaving, and he merely took away his razor for a moment as he replied, "Ay, I thought they meant to be off; very well," and "then another shave just as before, without another word till he was dressed."[1]

[1] Larpent, 63.

Not less marked than his own wisdom and self-control was his considerateness, nay, his tenderness to subordinates who fell into error. Save the one unpardonable offence, the unspeakable sin of direct disobedience, he could forgive much. The story is finely told by Napier of his silent rebuke to the generals who put their judgment before his in the retreat from Burgos. Wellington had given orders to march by a rather circuitous route in order to avoid inundations he knew were out along the main road. "This seemed so extraordinary to some general officers that, after consulting together, they deemed their commander unfit to conduct the army, and led their troops by what appeared to them the fittest line of retreat! He (Wellington) had before daylight placed himself at an important point on his own road, and waited impatiently for the arrival of the leading regiment until dawn; then, suspecting what had happened, he galloped to the other road, and found the would-be commanders stopped by water. The insubordination and the danger to the army were alike glaring, yet the practical rebuke was so severe and well-timed, the humiliation so complete and so deeply felt, that with one proud, sarcastic observation, indicating contempt more than anger, he led back the troops and drew off his forces safely."

The failure at Burgos seems to have drawn down upon him the distrust of many he commanded. He has himself admitted his errors in that operation, but they were not those visited upon him by his subordinates. "The fault of which I was guilty . . . was not that I undertook the expedition to Burgos with inadequate means, but that I took there the most inexperienced instead of the best troops." For the failure in the escalade of the fortress he blamed the officer entrusted with the command of it, who "paid no attention to orders given him both orally and in writing, but followed his own plan, which was to give no orders. When he fell no one knew what to do." After that no fresh attack could be made, because the full scheme was in the pockets of the dead man, and fell into the hands of the French. Wellington throughout this siege was continually hampered for want of means: he could not move up a gun from Madrid; important results failed for the want of fifty or sixty mules, and of a few bundles of straw to feed them.

To the last Wellington justified his attack on Burgos, the siege of which he raised, and retreated "not because there was any pressure upon me, but because I did not think Hill secure. I knew that if he was obliged to retire (from Madrid) I should be lost. . . . In short, I played a game which

might succeed (the only one which could succeed), and pushed it to the last; and the parts having failed, as I admit was to be expected, . . . I made a handsome retreat to the Agueda with some labour and inconvenience, but without material loss."

After this retreat we may understand the noble modesty of Von Moltke, who would not suffer himself to be put in comparison with Napoleon or Wellington, because, unlike them, he had "never conducted a retreat."

One other instance may be given of Wellington's magnanimity, and that was in his leniency to Craufurd after the affair of the Coa. Craufurd claimed on that occasion that he knew he could defend his position, but Wellington by no means agreed with him. "I am glad to see you safe, Craufurd," the chief said when he reappeared. To which Craufurd replied, "Oh, I was in no danger, I assure you." "But I was, from your conduct," retorted Wellington. Whereupon Craufurd withdrew, exclaiming, *sotto voce*, "He is d——d crusty to-day."[1] Wellington bore much from Craufurd, whose merits he knew well. Only in his private

[1] This incident is referred by Craufurd's biographer to the affair at Grimaldo, on the strength of Larpent. It seems to be better placed at a time just after the Coa.

correspondence he speaks his mind, and we appreciate the full measure of his kindly forbearance in a letter addressed about this time to Wellesley Pole. "Although I shall be hanged for them," he says, "you may be very certain that not only have I had nothing to do with, but had positively forbidden the foolish affairs in which Craufurd involved his outposts. . . . In that of the 24th, I had positively desired him not to engage in any affair on the other side of the Coa; . . . I had expressed my wish that he should draw on the other side of the river; and I repeated my injunction that he should not engage in any affair on the right of the river, in answer to a letter in which he told me that he thought the cavalry could not remain there without the infantry. After all this he remained two hours on his ground after the enemy had appeared in his front." They did not attack at once, and he could have retired twice over before they did, and to a safe situation, behind the river. "You will say . . . why not accuse Craufurd? I answer, because if I am to be hanged for it, I cannot accuse a man who I believe has meant well, and whose error is one of judgment and not of intention."

CHAPTER X

VITTORIA

Campaign of Vittoria—Masterly strategy—Advantages of his plan of operations—Turning movements ending in battle of Vittoria—Complete rout—Vast quantity of booty taken.

LET us return now to the active operations. After five years of strenuous and unceasing effort, of varying fortunes, of great triumphs neutralised by unavoidable retreat, of flux and reflux, the tide was now at last to set in one direction, and flow onward with an unbroken wave of success from Portugal into Southern France. The balance was to be now fairly adjusted between the opponents, the weight of advantage inclining rather to Wellington's side. Napoleon's power had been sorely tried by his disasters in Russia; he was driven to withdraw troops from Spain to strengthen himself at home. Wellington, on the other hand, had been largely reinforced in all arms. At the close of the preceding year (1812) he had written Beresford: "I propose to get into fortune's way[1]

[1] A favourite phrase with Wellington.

if I should be able to assemble an army sufficiently strong; and we may make a lucky hit in the commencement of next campaign." Early in 1813 he is "very much inclined to apprehend" that "instead of having too few troops in a state of discipline, we shall find we have more troops, clothed, armed, and disciplined, than the means of the country can support.[1] . . . It will answer no purpose to bring to the Douro or the Ebro crowds of starving soldiers."

His army was, however, in very good case: "The troops are all well cantoned; I hope a continuation of rest for a month or two in the spring will set us up entirely. I hoped to take the field with 70,000 British and Portuguese—I think I shall have 40,000 British, and possibly 25,000 Portuguese, and I shall be better equipped in artillery and much stronger in cavalry than we have yet been." His cavalry reinforcements had been substantial, and included the Life Guards and Horse Guards. With regard to his auxiliaries, a number of fresh Portuguese battalions had been raised, and the English general had at last been put in supreme command of the armies of Spain, a charge he accepted reluctantly and in ignorance

[1] This was ever the crux of campaigning in Spain—too few would not succeed, too many could not be subsisted.

of their real state. Had he known it, he writes, "I should have hesitated before I should have charged myself with such a Herculean labour as its command . . . but I will not relinquish the task because it is laborious and the success unpromising." To secure the latter he made stringent conditions, chief of which was that he should exercise uncontrolled authority, not over the Spanish army alone, but the whole resources of the state. No doubt if the Spanish troops had been treated as were the Portuguese in the early days of the war, they would have been equally efficient. The material was, as it always has been, magnificent; properly led, the Spaniards have been brave, patient, and enduring, and they are excellent marchers.

The months of leisure in winter quarters had been usefully spent in restoring the spirits, improving the discipline, and perfecting the organisation of the force for the field. Under Wellington's intelligent eye, every detail was considered: camp equipage and field equipment were seen to; new tin kettles replaced the old iron cooking pots; the troops gave up their great-coats and carried only a blanket, with a few necessaries and three pairs of shoes; tents were issued, three per company, to put an end to bivouacking and billeting; new baggage carts had

been devised, numbers of draught animals secured, and a pontoon train prepared.

Although Wellington's tactical skill, that of the leader on the narrower limits of the battle-field, has never been denied, many have doubted his capacity as a strategist, his power to plan a comprehensive campaign. Vittoria amply refutes such criticism. His scheme for the offensive in 1813 was large and judicious. It was said in the earlier phases of the Peninsular war, and on his own authority, that he had no settled plan,[1] that he adapted himself to circumstances; that he was like a man driving with rope harness—if any part gave way, he tied a fresh knot and went on again. In 1813, however, he had a clear and deliberate purpose, worked out with consummate astuteness.

There were risks in his plan of operations, but he was prepared to take them; it depended for success upon the profound secrecy of the first moves, and again upon the conquest of physical difficulties of no ordinary kind, but he had ascertained by careful inquiry that they were not insurmountable.

It was open to various technical objections, as

[1] Sir Brent Spencer once pointed out to Wellington that as he (Spencer) was the next senior, he ought to know something of his leader's plans. "I have no plans but to beat the French," was the short answer, inspired probably by the reticence that was so strong in him, and not a little by his distrust of Sir Brent Spencer.

that for a time it split his army into two entirely separate parts remote from, unable either to communicate with or support each other. But its advantages were commanding. By the direction of his march alone, his mere appearance on the Esla in force, he would invalidate the whole defensive line of the French. This was the line of the Douro, a formidable natural obstacle strengthened by fortifications, upon which Joseph chiefly relied. The French were now confined to the north-eastern half of Spain, supposing a line to divide it diagonally from the Asturias to Valencia. They thus held on, but weakly, to Madrid, while they covered their main line of communications with France, the royal road from the capital through Burgos, and Vittoria to Bayonne. No other line of operations promised Wellington so much. To force the Douro by frontal attack would have been a serious and costly undertaking; to advance along the valley of the Douro by its south bank, so as to strike at the French left, would be to betray his intentions and move through an exhausted territory. Again, the line he chose was that by which he would be least expected—always a great point in the assailant's favour. No one knew, his enemy least of all, that he relied upon being able to traverse the rugged, mountainous

country of North Portugal and South Gallicia; that he had improved the navigation of the Lower Douro as high as Lamego, where his left lay. Finally, his daring strategy would secure him, if successful, a new base, with a short line of communication to the Bay of Biscay, and thence to England by sea. This transfer of base from Portugal to some of the northern ports was indeed the key to his present and future operations. When he was thus firmly established the French would be vulnerable in the most vital point, and a series of well-delivered blows should open a road into France.

Let us now consider this eventful campaign more in detail.

Campaign of Vittoria

In May 1813, the allied forces, 75,000 strong, of whom 44,000 were British troops, occupied a line drawn from Lamego on the Douro, its left, through Ciudad Rodrigo, to the pass of Baños, the extreme right, under Hill. The Spanish army of Gallicia was some 40,000 men, but barely half accompanied Wellington.

At this time the French, 60,000, under King Joseph, lay all across Old Castille, from Toledo and Madrid on the left, with their centre behind the

Douro from Valladolid as far as Zamora, where the right lined the Esla.

15*th May*. Wellington directed Graham, with 40,000 men, to enter the Tras os Montes by the valleys of the Sabor and Tua (two effluents of the Douro), march northward, then work eastward through Braganza to the Esla. The road was rugged and difficult, so much so that the French never believed it could be used. But Wellington's surveys satisfied him it was practicable for wheels and guns. Graham completed his adventurous march by the 31st May.

Meanwhile Wellington, so soon as he was satisfied that Graham was well advanced, made a strong feint upon Salamanca, so as to occupy and distract the French. Hill also co-operated, aiming at the fords across the Upper Tormes. These movements deceived Joseph, who, fully expecting to be attacked from the south bank, fell back into his strong position behind the Douro.

Now the sudden arrival of Graham from the north, and at a point that jeopardised the whole French army by taking the river Douro in reverse, struck dismay into the enemy. The French hurriedly evacuated their works, destroyed the bridges, and fell back in full retreat towards Burgos, hoping, however, to make a fresh stand for concentration on the Pisuerga.

3rd June. Wellington was at Toro, holding both sides of the river, and with his whole army in hand. Next day he continued his turning movement, passed the Carrion and then the Pisuerga, once more threatening Joseph's right. The French again retreated, meaning to give battle at Burgos, backed by that fortress; but, receiving an unfavourable report of its condition, Joseph judged it imperative to retrograde still farther and occupy the line of the Ebro. This was a naturally strong position; the river was defensible, and it could only be approached from Burgos through narrow defiles, one the famous gorge of Pancorbo, which could be held by a handful against an army.

Again Wellington determined to move by the left flank, and closely reconnoitred the mountainous district on that side, where the Ebro takes its rise. It was reported, like that in North Portugal, unfit for wheeled traffic, but he was not deterred thereby. This march again was of the most arduous character, the difficulties encountered stupendous, but they were gallantly overcome. "Neither the winter gullies, nor the ravines, nor the precipitate passes among the rocks, retarded even the march of the artillery. Where horses could not draw, men hauled; when the wheels would not roll, the guns were let down or lifted

up with ropes. Six days they toiled unceasingly, and on the seventh—

20th June. "They burst like raging streams from every defile, and went foaming into the basin of Vittoria." Here the hapless king lay at his mercy, an easy prey. No decided resistance had been offered to Wellington's columns as they debouched from the mountains. But Joseph now knew he must fight, and at a disadvantage. He was outnumbered—the allies were 80,000 strong, flushed with unvarying success; he had but 60,000, and his position was vicious, for his battle front was parallel to his line of retreat. This front extended from Puebla on the left, through Ariñez in the centre, to Vittoria on the right, the whole covered by the Zadora River, a narrow stream with difficult banks, which flowed in the same direction as the high-road.

Wellington paused the rest of that day (20th), to allow his rear columns to close up, but next morning he attacked the enemy's position in three lines—Hill on the right, he himself in the centre, and Graham on the left. Hill's battle was for the commanding heights of Puebla, and he was long kept at bay; when at last he drove out the enemy and crossed the river, the centre was up in its place and ready to attack. But Hill's success had made

Ariñez, the French centre, untenable, and after some stiff fighting they abandoned this position, retreating in good order towards Vittoria. Meanwhile Graham, manœuvring on the far left, struck at the enemy's right and the high-road to Bayonne. He too carried all before him; the enemy, after a stubborn resistance, were driven out of their positions one after the other, so that Graham towards sundown was astride of the high-road, and closed the direct line of retreat into France.

"Never," says Napier, "was an army more hardly used by its commander, for the soldiers were not half-beaten, and yet never was a victory more complete." Wellington, in his own modest language, reported that he had driven the enemy from all their positions, "having taken from them 151 pieces of cannon (the French saved only one gun and one howitzer), waggons of ammunition, all their baggage, provisions, cattle, treasure, &c., and a considerable number of prisoners." The "loot" at Vittoria was colossal and heterogeneous.

The French, so one of the French generals (Gazan) records, lost all their equipages, all their guns, all their treasure, all their papers, so that no man could prove even how much pay was due to him. Generals and subordinate officers alike were

reduced to the clothes on their backs, and most of them were barefooted. Joseph's carriage was intercepted on the road to Pampeluna, and he barely escaped by mounting a fleet horse. Carriages innumerable were captured, laden with women [1] and plunder. Among the first were titled ladies of the court and many children; the latter comprised the spoils of years, gathered up by the unscrupulous usurpers of Spanish soil—plate, pictures,[2] jewellery, wine, furniture, valuables of all kinds. There were five and a half millions of dollars in the treasure-chests, although not a fiftieth part was recovered, so expert were the British marauders.

Vittoria was a crowning triumph, the fit completion of this remarkable campaign. The able strategy that had placed his army in a position to gain it, was only equalled by Wellington's tactical superiority on the field of battle. The victory had great and far-reaching results. It practically ended the war in the Peninsula, and almost entirely cleared it of

[1] A French prisoner after the battle said to Wellington, "Le fait est, monseigneur, que vous avez une armée, mais nous sommes un bordel ambulant."

[2] Some of the pictures, which had been cut from their frames for convenience of carriage, were famous old masters taken from the Royal Gallery, and of great value. Wellington restored them to King Ferdinand, their lawful owner, but he would not accept them, and sent them back to Wellington. They are the nucleus of the well-known picture gallery in Apsley House.

French troops. True, a force remained in Catalonia under Suchet, but more or less on sufferance; one or two fortresses still hoisted the French flag, but neither San Sebastian (which was at once besieged) nor Pampeluna (which was blockaded) could hope to hold out long. Another and though small gain to the British was the change of base, its transfer from Portugal to North Spain, which, as has been pointed out already, was a prominent feature in Wellington's plans. He had now fully justified the words he is said to have uttered, "Good-bye, Portugal!" when he rode away a short month previously to join Graham upon the Esla.

G. P. A. Healy, pinx. *Art Reproduction Co., sc.*

MARSHAL SOULT.

CHAPTER XI

CAMPAIGN OF THE PYRENEES

Soult supersedes King Joseph in south of France—Relative positions of English and French—Soult's attack—Battles of Sauroren—Wellington will not invade France prematurely—The passages of the Bidassoa, Nivelle, Nive, and Adour—Battle of Toulouse—Peace—Dispersion of Peninsular army.

THE giant, although sorely beset, was not yet in the death-throes, and Napoleon was bent on making one last desperate effort to stay Wellington's now imminent invasion of France. An imperial decree superseded Joseph and installed Soult as the Emperor's lieutenant in the south of France and Spain. Soult hurried post haste to the scene of action, which he reached on the 13th July, and by the most tremendous exertions rapidly reorganised and consolidated the beaten army. His object was to resume the offensive without delay, having, with true soldierly insight, exactly gauged Wellington's now difficult position. Soult was sanguine that a prompt initiative would be attended with decided success.

At this date the allied armies held the passes

of the Pyrenees—their southern issues, that is to say—and were disposed so as to cover both the blockade of Pampeluna and the siege of San Sebastian. The position was defective; Wellington knew it, but could not mend it and still carry on the business he had in hand. Its chief faults, as he himself pointed out in a despatch at the end of the operations now at hand, were that lateral communication between the points held by the British was "tedious and difficult"; that of the enemy upon the northern side of the passes was, on the other hand, "easy and short"; in case of attack, the most advanced posts in the first line could not support each other, and could only be reinforced from the rear.

Soult saw the strategic advantages he enjoyed; saw that he might gather swiftly against one flank and strike at it with overwhelming force before the other and distant flank or any of the intervening parts could reinforce it. He had but to choose between the two ends—whether he could essay to relieve San Sebastian at one, or Pampeluna at the other. The latter was the weakest, the most isolated, that which must soonest fall; San Sebastian he thought could still hold out, having sea communication with France, and being stoutly defended.

He had three principal *corps d'armée* and a reserve; the right under Reille, the centre under D'Erlon, the left under Clausel. Villatte commanded the reserve.

24*th July*. Reille and Clausel, with a part of D'Erlon's corps, were collected at St. Jean Pied de Port, and fell upon the British right at Roncesvalles. D'Erlon at the same time attacked the centre at Maya. All the British commanders, after fighting with great tenacity, retreated into positions far to the rear.

25*th July*. Late in the night Wellington, who was at San Sebastian, heard of Soult's advance, and he mounted and rode at once to the threatened right, fifty miles distant, and as he passed along the line he gathered up all the troops he found and directed every one to follow him.

27*th July*. Having ridden hard all day (26th), he reached Sauroren, where Picton and Cole were already *aux prises* with Soult. The English commander was alone—the one staff-officer who had galloped with him (Lord Fitz Roy Somerset) he had but lately sent with a pressing pencilled order for concentration—and as Wellington breasted the

steep hill-slope he was recognised by some Portuguese, who greeted him with tumultuous cheers. This inspiriting welcome was taken up and tossed from regiment to regiment along the crests of the hills. It was a small matter, yet this ebullition of enthusiastic confidence in a leader who had never yet been worsted had its effect, as Wellington anticipated, upon the coming engagement. "Yonder," he said aloud, "is a great commander, but he is cautious, and will delay the attack until he can ascertain the cause of those cheers; that will give time for the 6th Division to arrive, and I shall beat him."

In the two battles of Sauroren which followed and were fiercely disputed—"bludgeon work," as Wellington called them—the advantage was altogether to the British. Soult received reinforcements, and used them skilfully to withdraw his forces, having previously sent his guns, cavalry, and wounded to the rear. He opened up a new line of retreat, but was in the narrow valley of St. Esteban with a force (35,000) closely hemmed in, when the unexpected appearance of three marauding red-coats betrayed the near neighbourhood of Wellington's encircling army, and Soult made good his escape. "Thus the disobedience of three plundering knaves, unworthy of the name of soldiers, deprived one consummate commander of the most

splendid success, and saved another from the most terrible disaster." Wellington had hoped "to do the enemy more mischief," and yet the French suffered terribly in this boldly conceived but hazardous operation. Between the 25th July and the 2nd August they were engaged seriously no less than ten times, on many occasions in attacking strong positions, in others defending them only to be driven out and pursued. Nor did the British come off without enduring great hardships, for all at the end of the fighting were footsore, shoeless, and fatigued.

31*st August*. Soult made yet another effort to relieve San Sebastian, but on the very day that he had thrown bridges across the Bidassoa and attacked the Spaniards on the lower banks, the fortress was stormed and captured. The remnant of its brave garrison withdrew into the citadel, but surrendered ten days later with all the honours of war. Pampeluna still held out, but Soult left it to its fate, and retired behind the Bidassoa, condemned now to a defensive attitude for the rest of the campaign. For a brief space he was allowed a respite, for, although much urged to it, Wellington was still firmly resolved to make no premature invasion of France. The strength of his character was once again finely displayed in resisting pressure

and declining to commit his army to further adventure before they were refreshed and re-equipped. "An army which has made such marches and has fought such battles as has that under my command is necessarily much deteriorated. Independent of the actual loss of numbers by death, wounds, and sickness, many men and officers are out of the ranks for various causes. The equipment of the army, their ammunition, the soldiers' shoes, &c., require renewal; the magazines for the new operations require to be collected and formed, and many arrangements to be made, without which the army could not exist a day."[1] As usual, he had to depend mainly on himself. He got no assistance from the navy, although the sea was his chief line of communication. "The supplies of all kinds from Lisbon and other ports in Portugal are delayed for want of convoy."[2] Necessaries came quite as slowly from

[1] To Lord Bathurst, 8th August 1813.

[2] The shortcomings of the Admiralty at this particular juncture were a constant subject of complaint with Wellington. They would be inconceivable were not other contemporary records full of the incompetence of that department. Wellington spoke his mind plainly to the First Lord: "I complain of an actual want of necessary naval assistance and co-operation with the army. . . . I know nothing of the causes. . . . I state the fact, which nobody will deny." The navy had utterly failed to keep up the blockade of San Sebastian; yet the possession of the place was of the utmost importance before the bad season set in. All the British could afford was one frigate, and a few brigs and cutters only fit to carry despatches. The soldiers had to unload the transports, because no seamen could be furnished; and harbour boats of weak construction had to be used to land ordnance and shot and shell.

England. Moreover, the troops were still tainted with some of the old evils. The bonds of discipline had slackened under the trials of continuous campaigning and the temptations that follow in the train of unbroken victory. It was necessary to reform as well as to reorganise. The army must be "set to rights" — Wellington's own words — and this would be far more difficult if it was carried into the enemy's country. "If we were five times stronger than we are," he writes, "we could not venture to enter France if we cannot prevent our soldiers from plundering."

"Your lordship (Earl Bathurst) may depend upon it that I am by no means tired of success, and shall do everything in my power to draw attention to this quarter as soon as I shall know that hostilities are really renewed in Germany"— and when time was ripe for the next move ahead.

7th October. At length he deemed it expedient to cross the Bidassoa in order to establish his left more securely. This "stupendous operation," as Napier calls it, was an enterprise "as daring and dangerous as any undertaken during the whole war." Soult occupied the rocky heights of the northern bank with a series of strong entrenchments; down on the lower river artillery raked the known fords; and higher up, the mountains

themselves, the greater and the lesser Rhune and other almost inaccessible crags, had been worked into the line of defence.

Wellington having learnt that there were other fords practicable only at low water, and that the tide here rises and falls sixteen feet, secretly laid his plans to throw a strong force across the sands at the mouth of the river. He left his tents standing, and so deceived the enemy that his columns were soon across and firmly established on the northern shore, from which they at once assailed the French redoubts. Meanwhile the Spaniards had gone over by the known fords, and the French, taken at both flanks, evacuating their works, fell back precipitately. The risk of this attack had been tremendous; any prolonged check would have been fatal, "because in two hours the returning tide would have come in with a swallowing flood upon the rear." Higher up the river, on Wellington's right, there was a more obstinate struggle. The French were greatly favoured by their position among the mountain fastnesses, but these the intrepid gallantry of British and Spaniards eventually carried.

Wellington was now in France, but only on its rocky verge; his army, half famished and shivering, high up among the hills, still looked down upon the smiling plains as to a promised land, and pined to

be led farther forward. Soult had withdrawn behind the Nivelle, where, with inexhaustible pluck and patience, he constructed a new line of works second only in strength to those in which Wellington had defied Massena at Torres Vedras. His right was nearly impregnable, resting on the sea; his left was among mountain ridges that could not be turned; only in the centre, at its junction with the left, was a weak spot, where Wellington broke in with superior numbers, and separating the parts, beat each in turn. The right, taken in reverse, was no longer tenable, and in due course withdrew. The fighting on the Nivelle extended over three days, and was of a very desperate character. Wellington told Sir Henry Bunbury almost immediately afterwards that of all his battles he was best satisfied with the Nivelle, and that had he been able to trust the Spaniards for only a couple of hours, he would have forced Soult's right wing to lay down its arms. His superior strategy shown in his adoption of the true line of movement, and his excellent tactical combinations, were nobly seconded by the courage of his troops. Soult, who had thought his position nearly impregnable, now took up the line of the Nive, still farther to the rear, with a large part of his force in an entrenched camp on the Adour below Bayonne. The French

were well placed in the centre of a circle, around the circumference of which Wellington's army was distributed in difficult ground, and but poorly supplied with food and forage.

Accordingly the English commander determined to throw his army across the Nive and gain command of the more fertile country beyond. His whole force was now formed into three corps, commanded respectively by Hill, Beresford, and Hope. His army had recently been weakened by his summary dismissal of his Spanish allies for their excesses in France, but he knew that the whole country would rise in arms against marauders, and that he was better without the Spaniards.

9th December. Hope was to advance with the left and occupy Soult, while Beresford in the centre and Hill on the right crossed the Nive. Soult, benefiting by his central position, struck first at Hope, but was foiled after some very severe fighting; then, believing Hill to be alone and unsupported upon the French side of the Nive, he turned, and found him in a really critical position between the rivers. The battle of St. Pierre which followed, and in which Hill stood the shock alone, and won just before the arrival of the 6th Division, sent by Wellington to his support, was one of the most desperate in the whole war. "Wellington said he

had never seen a field so thickly strewn with dead; nor can the vigour of the combatants be well denied when 5000 men were killed and wounded in three hours upon a space of one mile." After this the opposing armies went into winter quarters, Soult extending from Bayonne along the Adour, Wellington across the Nive, but based still upon the Biscayan ports.

The year 1814, which was to see the termination of this protracted struggle, found Wellington still full of political embarrassments, but superlatively strong in numbers, and with an overflowing military chest. His aim now was to advance farther into France and rally the Bourbon party round him, but it was necessary first to reduce or neutralise Bayonne. For this purpose investment was indispensable, and yet the north side could only be reached by bridging the Adour, a great river with a strong current, held with troops and gunboats above the town, while below the tide-way ran seven miles an hour, and there were French warships to interfere with any attempted passage. Yet Wellington once more resolved to turn the seemingly impossible to his purpose, and rightly judging that Soult would not look for him below Bayonne, laid his plans to bridge the Adour near the mouth, six miles from the town, "at a point

so barred with sands, so beaten with surges, so difficult of navigation even with landmarks, some of which the French had removed, that it seemed impossible for vessels fit for a bridge to enter from the sea; and a strong defensive force would inevitably bar the construction if they could."

22*nd February*. While Wellington's right and centre drew Soult from Bayonne by operating against his left upon the higher Adour, Sir John Hope was entrusted with the formation of the great bridge at the mouth of that river. Tempestuous weather delayed this extraordinary operation, and the flotilla to be employed was still at sea, when Hope, "whose firmness no untoward event could ever shake, resolved to attempt the passage with the army alone." Small parties were thrown across till a respectable force was gathered on the north bank, the French having made no effort to check them till too late.

24*th February*. The vessels came in under full sail, and were driven recklessly across the raging surge to the point where the bridge was to be laid. Happily, when once within the river banks, the outermost acted as a breakwater, and enabled the large two-masted boats (*chasse marées*) employed to ride safely and support the nearest artillery and carriages. Nevertheless, "misfortune,

the errors of the enemy, the matchless skill and daring of the British seamen, the discipline and intrepidity of the British soldiers, all combined by the genius of Wellington, were necessary to the success of this stupendous undertaking, which must always rank among the prodigies of war."

Wellington's forward movement on the right had been prosecuted with great vigour. Within sixteen days he traversed eighty miles, passed five large and several small rivers, forced the enemy to abandon two fortified bridge-heads and many minor works, carried one great battle (Orthez) and two combats . . . forced Soult to abandon Bayonne, and cut him off from Bordeaux."[1] Soult had never a chance from the first. "Having early proved the power of his adversary, he had never deceived himself about the ultimate course of the campaign, and, therefore, struggled without hope, a hard task." In a campaign of nine months' duration he delivered twenty-four battles and combats. "Defeated in all, he fought the last as fiercely as the first, remaining unconquered in mind, and still intent upon renewing the struggle, when peace came to put a stop to his prodigious efforts." He made his last stand at Toulouse, a strategic centre commanding many roads, and the chief arsenal of the

[1] Napier.

south of France, and here he lost the last battle of the campaign, although he made good his retreat. About the same time the garrison of Bayonne made a determined sortie, and the besiegers narrowly escaped a serious disaster.

11*th April.* In the afternoon of the day after the battle, news reached Toulouse of the abdication of Napoleon, and that the war was at an end. Spaniards and Portuguese recrossed the Pyrenees; part of the British infantry was shipped to America, part came home; the cavalry marched through France, and embarked for England at Boulogne. Wellington himself passed on to Paris, but before leaving his army he issued a farewell order asking them to accept his thanks for their service. Although circumstances may alter the relations in which he has stood to them for some years, so much to his satisfaction, he assures them he will never cease to feel the warmest interest in their welfare and honour, and that he "will at all times be happy to be of any service to those to whose conduct, discipline, and gallantry their country is so much indebted." This was the *amende honorable.* The hard words so freely cast upon early misdeeds, the sharp discipline so often applied to correct disorder, were forgotten now in the hour of final triumph. It was of this same

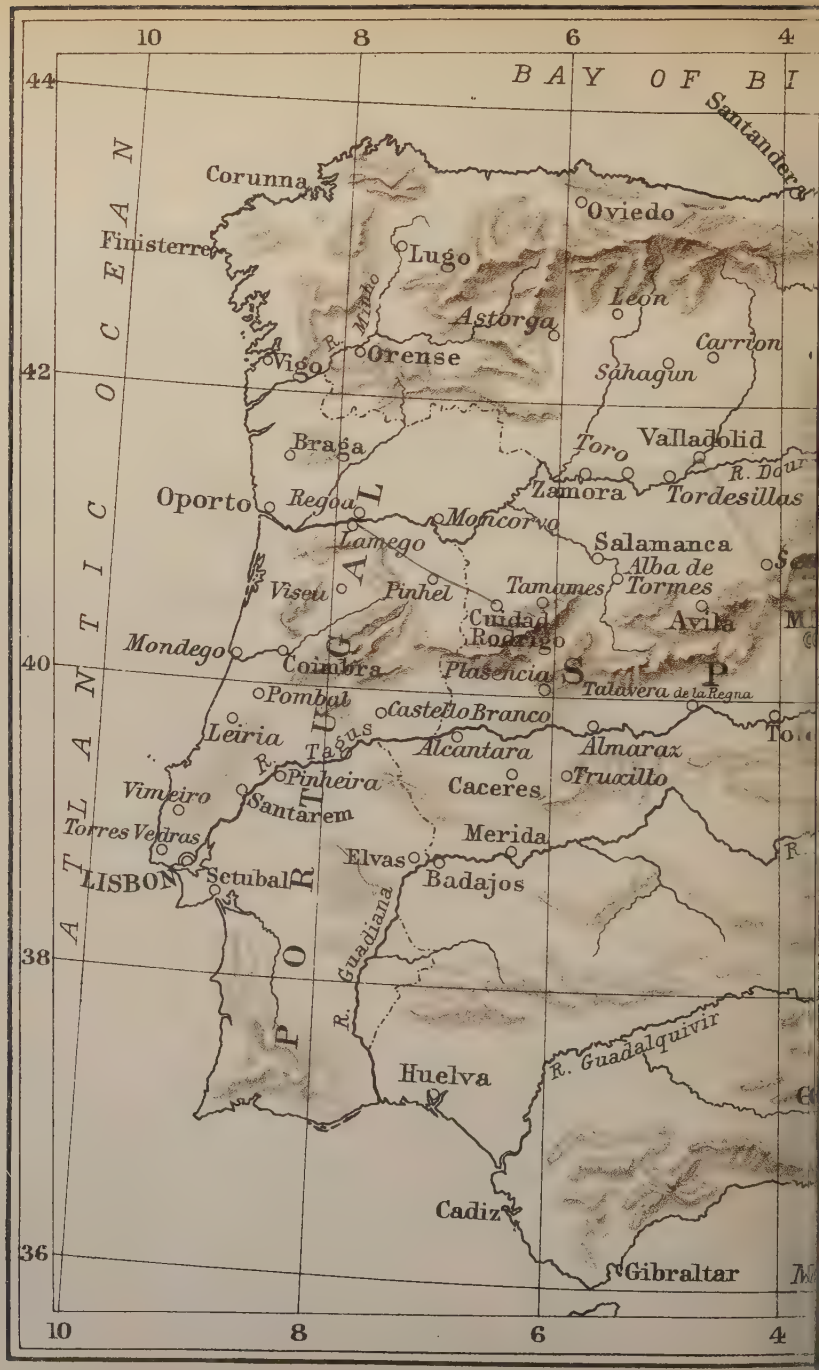
army, and a little before the conclusion of the war, that he spoke in such glowing terms to Sir Henry Bunbury: "I have the finest army that ever man commanded. I don't believe there ever was such an army. Not a man or officer behaves ill, except ——," mentioning one or two; "and the Portuguese are nearly as good as the British troops." After all, the credit of their transformation was principally due to himself. The pity of it was that they were soon dispersed to the four corners of the earth. Fourteen thousand British veterans were at once sent to be frittered away in a fratricidal war beyond the Atlantic, and, as we shall presently see, Wellington had to fight out the next and last contest with much more doubtful material.

CHAPTER XII

NAPOLEON REAPPEARS

Escape from Elba—Coalition of Great Powers, and vast preparations—Belgium filled with allied troops—Blucher's and Wellington's armies—Napoleon's efforts—His army—His plan of action—Considerations—Wellington's position examined.

WELLINGTON was checked in his homeward journey by a call for his presence in Madrid, where Ferdinand VII. had ascended the throne. Thence he moved northward, and again passing through Paris, reached London on the 23rd June. He was the great hero of the hour. The mob dragged his carriage through the streets; he was the chosen, honoured companion of the allied sovereigns just then the guests of England. Now he took his seat in the House of Lords, passing through every grade of the peerage at one and the same time—saluted in succession "Baron," "Viscount," "Earl," "Marquis," and "Duke." He received the thanks of the Commons clad in the full dress of a field-marshal, and was presented with the noble gift of £400,000; last of all, he carried the sword of state at the public thanksgiving in St. Paul's.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Toro
Valladolid
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Oporto
Regoa
Zamora
Tordesillas
Moncorvo
Lamego
Salamanca
Alba de Tormes
Viseu
Pinhel
Tamames
Avila
Cuidad Rodrigo
Mondego
Coimbra
Plasencia
Talavera de la Regna
PORTUGAL
Pombal
Castello Branco
Leiria
R. Tagus
Alcantara
Almaraz
Pinheira
Caceres
Trucillo
Vimeiro
Santarem
Torres Vedras
Merida
Elvas
LISBON
Setubal
Badajos
R. Guadiana
Huelva
R. Guadalquivir
Cadiz
Gibraltar

London

Stanford's Geogr.l Estab.t

But his labours as the champion and saviour of Europe were not yet ended. Napoleon, exiled to Elba after the capitulation of Paris in 1814, returned to France on the 1st March in the following year. This startling news was everywhere received with indignation and alarm. The disturbing element was once more set free to scatter desolation through Europe. The Great Powers, whose representatives were just then wrangling in congress at Vienna, united to make common cause against Napoleon. It was affirmed as a principle that there could be no comfort or safety until the disturber of European tranquillity had been crushed and overthrown. Napoleon should have neither peace nor truce. England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia bound themselves by solemn treaty to furnish each 150,000 men, and to remain under arms until the great object of the war had been attained. All eyes were turned on Wellington, and it is reported that the Czar Alexander said to him, as he placed his hand familiarly upon his shoulder: "C'est pour vous encore sauver le monde."

Vast preparations were at once set on foot. Austria slowly collected a gigantic host upon the Rhine frontier. Russia, more remote, had called out a quarter of a million of men, and was to act in support of Austria. England and Prussia,

concentrating more rapidly, soon filled Belgium, "the cockpit of Europe," with troops. By the end of May Wellington had under his orders a mixed force of 100,000 men, with 194 guns; Marshal Blucher commanded an army of 120,000, all Prussians, with 300 guns. Wellington's army was a polyglot, heterogeneous body. British, Hanoverians, Dutch, Belgians, and Nassauers served side by side. Of the first, only a small portion were seasoned veterans, but few of them his old Peninsular comrades, the men who (when pleased with them) he had said could "go anywhere and do anything." His own army was largely composed of second battalions, hastily filled up with militia recruits. Of the total 30,000 British, not above 6000 had seen a shot fired before.[1] For purposes of defensive fight they proved equal to the best, but Wellington would not have dared to manœuvre them under heavy fire over rough ground. His own opinion, as given to Lord Stanhope in 1840, of his Waterloo army, was that on the whole it was certainly "an infamously bad one, and the enemy knew it. But, however, it beat them." As for his allies, he had no great reason to

[1] "I never saw such a set of boys, both officers and men," said an old general (Mackenzie) when inspecting the 3rd battalion 14th at Brussels. Fourteen officers and three hundred men were under twenty years of age. "The worst army ever brought together," the Duke said before the battle; yet after it, it was his opinion that he "never saw British infantry behave so well."

trust the fidelity of the Brunswickers and Nassauer troops, raised in countries long subject to French influence. Both the Hanoverian and Dutch Belgian contingents were made up of raw recruits. But the English cavalry was magnificent, well mounted and equipped, and thoroughly trained, the very flower of the army; and the artillery was splendid, efficient and complete at every point.[1] As regards his officers, the English commander had but few of his great Peninsular lieutenants to support him; Hill and Picton were the chief, with Clinton, Kempt, Colville, Pack, De Lancy, Shaw Kennedy, and a few more. His staff, except the personal, were not his own choice, but made up mostly of the friends of the Duke of York. Never had nepotism been more in the ascendant, and the great general, whose prowess had been so fully proved, had no voice in the selection of the agents who were to work out his views. He complains bitterly to Lord Bathurst, in a letter dated 4th May: "To tell you the truth, I am not very well pleased either with the manner in which the Horse Guards have conducted themselves towards me. It will be admitted that the army is not a very good one; and

[1] When Blucher accompanied the Duke in his inspection of Mercer's battery of horse artillery, he was so struck with its splendid appearance that he declared every horse in it was fit for a field-marshal.

being composed as it is, I might have expected that the generals and staff formed by me in the late war would have been allowed to me again; but, instead, I am overloaded with people I have never seen before, and it seems to have been intended to keep those out of the way whom I wished to have. However, I will do the best I can with the instruments sent to assist me."

"I have got an infamous army," he wrote Lord Stewart, "very weak and ill equipped; and a very inexperienced staff." This staff was clearly responsible for that neglect to strengthen La Haye Sainte which led to its capture by the French and nearly jeopardised the day. Wellington took the blame of it himself—he never hesitated to accept responsibility even for the omissions of others—but proposals to fortify La Haye Sainte had been put before the headquarter staff, and either rejected or ignored.

Napoleon, as is well known, strained every nerve throughout the early part of the famous "Hundred Days" to reorganise the troops he had so often led to victory, and who now received him with universal acclaim. Although long years of incessant warfare had drained France of men, and military service was not too popular, Napoleon made prodigious exertions to raise new levies, and

Duchess of Wellington.

he had at hand the veterans who had been prisoners of war till the peace, and who now at once fell into line. He carried out many urgent services; he fortified and armed Paris, replenished the frontier fortresses, found remounts and equipped cavalry and guns anew, revived the Imperial Guard, increased the number of regimental officers, and raised two hundred battalions of National Guards. Many (although not all) of his generals, the men he had made, had rallied round him; Soult, Ney, Grouchy, Reille, D'Erlon, Vandamme, Gérard, Lobau, Exelmans, Kellermann, Milhaud, had thrown in their fortunes with his, and were appointed to various commands.

As the result of these extraordinary exertions he had by the beginning of June an army of little less than 200,000 men available for active operations in the field. After making many inevitable deductions for the occupation and observation of other points, there remained some 128,000 men whom he concentrated upon the northern frontier of France. With this obviously disproportionate force he resolved to attack the allied armies in Belgium.

The enterprise might seem hazardous, but it was well conceived. Many reasons concurred to induce Napoleon to take the offensive at once.

Time with him was everything. Day by day his enemies gathered strength. Within another month or so Austrians and Russians would be on the eastern frontier in overwhelming numbers. He could not with safety to himself await attack on any side. Any invasion the least successful had no doubt alienated French sympathy and hastened his abdication. He could not risk that chance again, and yet the allies in Belgium already menaced Paris; Wellington, as we now know, was already considering schemes for advance. A prompt initiative promised much to Napoleon. Early success would bring him manifest, even incalculable advantages. If he could beat English and Prussians, capture Brussels and hold Belgium, he might then turn to the Rhine and defend it against attack from the eastward; he might detach Austria, ever wavering, from the coalition, and by these new triumphs revive the flagging enthusiasm of his people.

True, he was inferior in numbers to his two enemies combined. But he knew accurately the nondescript character of Wellington's army, and he had often beaten the Prussians before. He counted not a little upon his own personal presence, and the impetus it would give to his devoted troops; he knew himself to be a past-master in the art of war, the superior probably to the generals

opposed to him, whose dispositions, so far as he could ascertain them, were faulty, and exposed them to defeat. By the very nature of the duty imposed upon them, the allied armies were hampered by strategic difficulties from the first. They were to combine in defence of Belgium, yet each covered a divergent line of communications upon bases widely apart. The English were based upon Ostend and Antwerp, the Prussians upon Cologne. If forced back each by his own line, they must separate as they retreated, while a victorious enemy was securely planted between them. To aim at their nearest point of junction, thrust himself in and attack each singly before the other could reinforce, offered Napoleon a marvellous strategic opportunity. This was the plan, the almost obvious plan, he adopted.

Wellington's military reputation has been much assailed for his failure to realise this. To the last he looked for the French upon his right; he firmly believed that Napoleon would advance by the line of Mons or Tournai on Hal and Brussels, and held his principal forces therefore on that side. Most of the English troops were on the right; the reserves were in and around Brussels; the Dutch and Belgians on the left filled in the line and communicated with the Prussians. Wellington

never changed this opinion. In a memorandum written in 1842 upon Waterloo he adhered to it, and even thought that after Quatre Bras Napoleon would more wisely have operated against his (Wellington's) extreme right at Hal. We have no means of knowing what induced this pertinacious adherence to what seems a strategical error. Some writers have imagined the Duke was in possession of some secret information that biassed his judgment. The only advantage this line offered Napoleon was that it threatened the Duke's communications with the sea—an obvious advantage of course, but which was more than counterbalanced by the fact that attack in this direction would have thrown Wellington back on Blucher and forced that concentration of the allies it was Napoleon's first business to impede.

Wellington's fears for his right survived the definite knowledge that the enemy was advancing by the centre. It lasted through the whole of the great day of battle, when victory hung by a thread and every man was required on the field. Yet throughout the action Wellington kept almost a whole division (Colville's), some 4000 men, inactive at Hal, some six miles distant from Waterloo, too far to give effective aid. There was no reason for this. Quite early on the 18th it was known that the

weight of Napoleon's attack would be upon the centre. Moreover, to make any move against the British right would have been a long flank march in the presence of a powerful enemy. Had Colville been summoned to the battle-field even so late as 8 A.M., he could have been on the ground before the action commenced; at any time later during the day, up to two or three o'clock, he could still have rendered valuable assistance. There is force, therefore, in the adverse comments so freely made on this mistake, and there is indeed no defence for the error to use all available strength in such a closely contested and momentous affair. Yet it may be said for Wellington (and I do not remember to have heard this point raised) that a fresh and unbroken division on the right flank would have availed much if the day had gone against us; Colville's men, if skilfully handled, might have covered the retreat from Hal through Ninove on Ghent and Ostend. Was not Wellington, in fact, technically right in keeping a reserve intact for use in case of disaster?

CHAPTER XIII

LIGNY AND QUATRE BRAS

Opening of Waterloo campaign--Napoleon's advance—Position of the allies—Forces widely disseminated—Rupture imminent—Tardy concentration—Ligny and Quatre Bras—Retreat on Waterloo—Napoleon's pursuit—Did Wellington ride to Wavre?—The great charger "Copenhagen"—Evidence for and against the ride.

HAVING decided upon his plan of operations, Napoleon put it into execution with all possible secrecy and despatch. No one, under penalty of death, was permitted to cross the frontier, and behind this (as he hoped) impenetrable screen he prepared his attack. But news, definite although imperfect, reached the allied commanders about the 14th that the French were on the move. In the early part of June Napoleon's five *corps d'armée* had been stationed as follows :—

First and second, under D'Erlon and Reille, were on the Belgian frontier.

Third, under Vandamme, in the Ardennes.

Fourth, under Gérard, on the Moselle.

Sixth, with the Imperial Guard and the reserve cavalry, on the road from Paris moving northwards.

H. Landseer, A.R.A. *Walker & Boutall, sc.*

MARQUESS OF ANGLESEY, K.G.

The fifth corps was employed on special service guarding the approaches to the Rhine.

14th June. Quickly and with wonderful precision the whole of these forces were concentrated behind the Sambre on that night. The left wing was at Solre-sur-Sambre, the centre about Beaumont, the right at Philippeville. The direction of all was towards Charleroi, a town on the high-road to Brussels, and but thirty-four miles from that capital. Orders were issued for a general advance at dawn next day, the 15th June.

Let us now review the positions of the allies upon this 14th June, the eve of the short but most memorable Waterloo campaign. Wellington had formed his forces into two army corps, a reserve and a cavalry corps.

1°. The first corps was under the command of the Prince of Orange, and consisted of the 1st Division (Cooke), 3rd (Alten), 2nd Dutch Belgian (Perpoucher), 3rd Dutch Belgian (Chassé).

2°. The second corps was under Lord Hill, and was made up of the 2nd Division (Clinton), 4th (Colville), and the 1st Dutch Belgian (Stedmann).

The cavalry were under the Earl of Uxbridge (afterwards Marquis of Anglesea); and

3°. The reserve, composed of the 5th and 6th Divisions, commanded respectively by Picton and

Cole, he held in his own hands. There was a 7th Division, and a Brunswick, Hanoverian, and Nassau corps. Wellington, to watch his portion of the frontier, and having always the fear for his right in mind, held his first corps about Mons, Nivelles, and Enghien; his second was farther to the westward, along the line of the Scheldt, while the reserve was in and around Brussels.

Blucher's army was in four corps, commanded by Ziethen, Pirch, Thielmann, and Bülow. The first corps (Ziethen) was in and about Charleroi; the second (Pirch) was at Namur, the third (Thielmann) still farther to the left rear at Ciney, and the fourth (Bülow) away back at Liège.

This dispersion of the allied forces over a line one hundred miles wide and forty miles deep has been sharply criticised by military writers. To emphasise the fault—and such it clearly was—the allied commanders suffered their forces to remain in their cantonments until the exact line of the French was clearly developed. They should rather have been assembled immediately the report arrived that the French were in motion; they should have been collecting and concentrating upon the 14th at points where they could oppose the enemy's advance and at the same time mutually support each other. Their neglect, oversight, error, call it what we may,

placed them for a time in imminent peril. They were in the first instance so widely scattered that they, and Wellington in particular, could not at first bring more than fractions to face Napoleon's attack. Had the French Emperor been more intelligently and promptly seconded, the campaign would have ended very differently, and history must have told another tale.

15th June. The first point of impact was at Charleroi, in the morning, where the French came into collision with Ziethen, who, acting under Blucher's orders, fell back, fighting, upon Fleurus. At the same time orders were sent to hurry up the other Prussian division. Wellington's action was slower and more circumspect. He appears to have been informed about midday the 15th that the French had definitely abandoned the western road by Mons, and were all gathering towards Charleroi. He hesitated to accept this news as final, and would not move his army against what might prove to be a feint. This surely was an error in judgment, and his tardy concentration towards his left jeopardised his own position, while it quite precluded him from supporting Blucher if attacked, as he soon was, by Napoleon. Both the allied generals were agreed upon the paramount importance of maintaining their lateral communications, yet they were

outgeneralled, and so completely, that at 3 P.M. on the 15th, to quote Chesney, "but one Prussian division was near the ground (of coming contest), and, saving one division (Perpoucher's Dutch Belgians), not a man of Wellington's army within reach of it, whilst the head of a column of 40,000 Frenchmen had crossed the Sambre at Marchiennes, and that of another of nearly 70,000 was entering Charleroi!"

By nightfall on the 15th complete rupture between the allies was imminent, and Ney, to whom Napoleon had that day confided sole command of the left, was at Frasne, upon the Brussels road, having in front of him only one brigade of Dutch Belgians, under Prince Bernard of Saxe-Weimar. That officer, with great promptitude, had however occupied and was holding Quatre Bras. His judgment in this respect has been questioned, on the theory that he was exposing a fraction to be overpowered by a vastly superior force; but if it was right at all to offer resistance so far in advance, then it was imperative to retain Quatre Bras at all hazards. Wellington was of this opinion. Although he had first ordered concentration upon Nivelles, he presently realised that he must take more to his left—to Quatre Bras, in short—if he would co-operate with Blucher. Opinions differ as

G. Richmond. W. L. Colls. sc

Lord Hill.

to the precise moment that he came to this obvious conclusion. In his own despatch written after Waterloo, he implies that he had issued the orders for Quatre Bras upon the night of the 15th. Baron Muffling, the Prussian commissioner attached to British headquarters, records that Wellington said to him at midnight on the 15th, "Orders for the concentration of my army at Nivelles and Quatre Bras are already despatched." Lord Malmesbury, who was at the Duke of Richmond's ball, writes that he heard the Duke of Wellington make a similar statement to his host just before leaving the ball. Yet no such orders have been preserved, and there is strong presumptive evidence that Wellington did not order the Quatre Bras concentration till the morning of the 16th June. The movement was even slower than he calculated, with the result that Prince Bernard of Saxe-Weimar and Perpoucher, who reinforced, were for some hours in front of Ney's superior force, and in grave danger.

16*th June*. Napoleon did not act with his customary promptitude. Although he had seen and given Ney verbal instructions to attack the English, he was to await written orders, and these were not sent out till 9 A.M. Now Napoleon had decided to operate by two wings; he entrusted

the left to Ney, the right to Grouchy, and meant to accompany the latter himself. Ney was to fall upon whatever force he found in front of him, overwhelm and continue his march on Brussels. Grouchy, under the Emperor's own guidance, was to act against the Prussians, who were to be sharply attacked, at Sombreffe if there encountered ; if they had retired to Gembloux, they were to be followed and still attacked. After he had disposed of the Prussians, Napoleon proposed to join Ney with all available forces and deal next with Wellington.

The battle of Ligny, fought on the afternoon of the 16th, has been considered one of Napoleon's best ; never had he been more skilful, more cautious, and yet more bold. It took place too late in the day, however, and supremely decisive results were lost through the misadventure with D'Erlon s corps. This corps belonged to Ney's command, but was diverted in its march to join him by an order to co-operate with the Emperor. Yet he came on the ground at Ligny without being looked for, and doubts whether he were friend or foe delayed Napoleon's great attack. Then when his aid was most needed he disappeared from the field, recalled unwittingly by Ney. It was D'Erlon's sad fate to have been useless that day to both Napoleon and Ney ; he only served Wellington, who but for his

absence at Quatre Bras might easily have been overpowered. Ligny was a victory to the French, but although it robbed Blucher of a third of his strength and forced him to retreat, Napoleon was disappointed, for he had the battle in his hand quite early in the day, and thought with Ney's co-operation to annihilate and wipe out the Prussians. Blucher was able, too, to retreat in good order, concealing his direction from the French, and he now made for Wavre, having generously resolved to surrender his line of communications with his base, in order to regain "touch" with his ally.

Wellington had promised to support the Prussians, but only on condition that he was not himself attacked. He had ridden over, on his arrival at Quatre Bras, to confer with Blucher, and he agreed then to act upon the French flank or as a reserve. But on his return, Ney, who had been hitherto motionless, came on with great vigour. By this time Picton with the 5th Division was near at hand, and a stubborn resistance met the French. It was a fierce action, gallantly fought on both sides, but victory remained with the indomitable British infantry, recruits mostly, whose squares bravely resisted the most determined charges of the French cavalry.

17th June. There had been no news of Blucher the previous evening, nor again this morning until

the day was well advanced. Wellington had his misgivings of the result of the action; for on visiting the Prussian position at Ligny before the battle, he expressed his strong disapproval of it. His keen military eye soon saw its defects: the Prussian columns were dotted all along the slope of a hill, so that no cannon ball could miss its effect upon them, and, as he told Sir Henry Hardinge, he fully expected them to be "damnably mauled." He used the same forcible language when conversing upon the day's events with Captain Bowles, who was with his company in advance at Quatre Bras. While they talked, Bowles tells us,[1] a staff-officer came up and whispered something in Wellington's ear, who, without the least change of countenance, gave him some orders and dismissed him. Then the Duke turned to Bowles and said quietly: "Old Blucher has had a d——d good licking, and gone back to Wavre, eighteen miles. As he has gone back, we must go back too. I suppose in England they will say we have been licked. I can't help it: as they have gone back, we must go back too." "He made all the arrangements for retiring, without moving from the spot where he was standing, and it certainly did not occupy him five minutes."

Napoleon was again slow to move after Ligny.

[1] In a letter to a friend.

He was no doubt badly served by Ney, who, chafing at the interference with D'Erlon, one of his corps commanders, had made no report, as was clearly his bounden duty, of his check at Quatre Bras. Napoleon had to call for the information, and about midday he sent Ney orders to renew his attack and drive the English out of Quatre Bras. At the same time he gave Grouchy orders to pursue the retreating Prussians and find out exactly what they meant to do. Had this order been punctually and promptly obeyed, the changed line of retreat from Namur to Wavre, with its manifest object, would have been known to Napoleon, and of course to Grouchy, in time to alter events. The mere suspicion of Blucher's *rapprochement* to Wellington would have roused Grouchy into a strenuous effort to intercept him.

Ney moved forward at 1 P.M., but long before the French columns were in movement Wellington was far on his way to Waterloo. He had been cautiously withdrawing his force all the morning, and, covered by Alten's division, the British retreated, in excellent order. When Napoleon came up, about 1 P.M., he blamed Ney bitterly for his supineness, and launched Reille's cavalry in pursuit of the English; but the utmost activity of horse and guns, under the eye of the Emperor, could bring no

more than one sharp encounter, at Genappe, before Wellington reached Waterloo. Here, or more exactly at Mont St. Jean, he turned, resolved to give battle in the position he had already selected and had surveyed for the purpose. Some military critics, Napoleon chief among them, condemn Wellington's decision. His proper course, they maintain, was to have continued his retreat through the forest of Soignies, and so gained time; time in which Blucher could certainly have joined him with his whole army in front of Brussels, in which large English reinforcements could reach him from the seaboard; time which would have made Napoleon's position more and more precarious, with a forest intervening between and an enemy twice his strength, and fresh enemies in almost countless numbers closing in on his rear. Clausewitz, a writer of the highest authority, however, defends Wellington's action on the grounds that Wavre was but ten miles distant from Waterloo, and that Blucher had promised to come with all his army to Waterloo.

That Wellington risked much in fighting with inferior forces, part of whom were probably disaffected, cannot be denied. But he was prepared to face the risks. A battle was necessary; the campaign could only thus be brought to a decisive issue, and there would be none if he fell back from

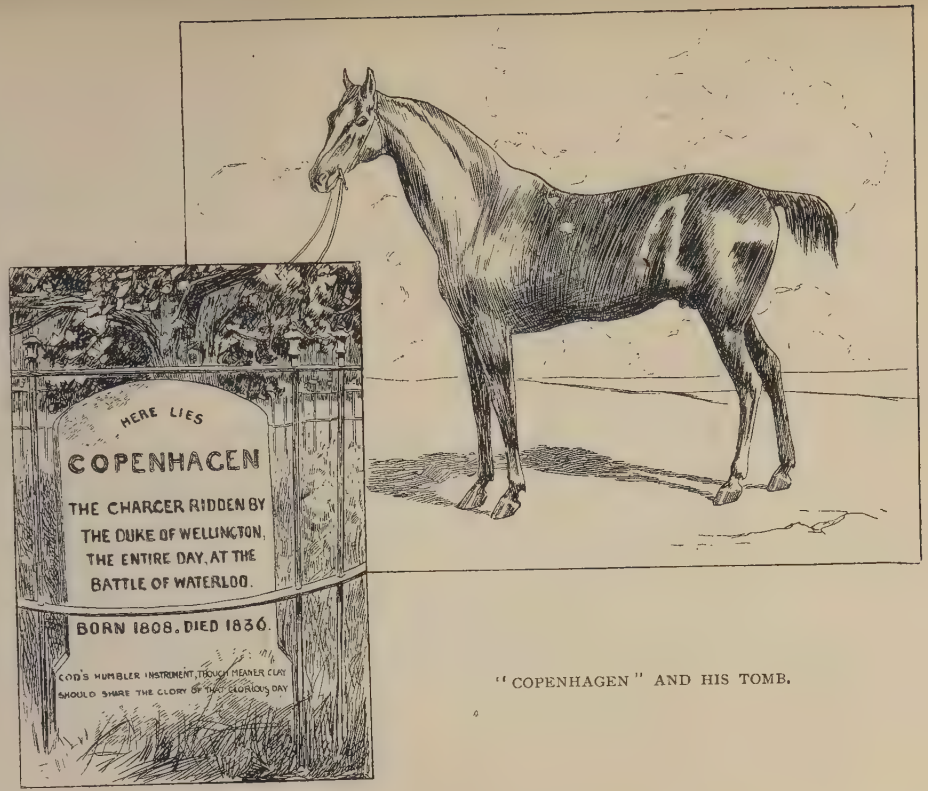
Waterloo. Besides, it is now absolutely certain that Wellington stood his ground having the fullest and clearest assurance of Blucher's support. He had made this a condition, indeed, of his halt at Waterloo. The general impression is that the assurance above mentioned was not given till midnight on the 17th, and that the official despatch embodying it only reached Wellington on the morning of the battle. Yet he counted upon it, and for other reasons. No doubt, in the first instance he took up his ground without it, and on no one momentous occasion of his eventful life did he show greater courage and self-reliance than in thus facing round. Now, an old story has been revived that Wellington rode over in person to Wavre on the night of the 17th and got the promise of Prussian support from Blucher's own lips. The story has lately been investigated by a writer of authority,[1] and appears to rest upon plausible evidence. True, Lord Ellesmere, in 1847, denies it, and is supposed to have been inspired by the Duke himself. On the other hand, two trustworthy witnesses relate it with great circumstantiality, on the Duke's authority. One is Mr. Charles Mayne Young, the other a son of Mr. Justice Coltman. The first heard it from

[1] General F. Maurice, R.A., *United Service Magazine*, Sept. 1890.

Mr. Pierrepoint, who had just returned from a visit to the Duke at Strathfieldsaye; the other from his father, who had also just come from Strathfieldsaye. The details are identical, although neither had seen the other's account.

It appears to have arisen out of an inquiry for the famous charger Copenhagen, which had been dead some years.[1] The Duke then proceeded to give an instance of the horse's quality. "There may have been many faster horses, no doubt many handsomer," said the Duke, "but for bottom and endurance I never saw his fellow." He had ridden him since 10 A.M. on the 17th, and in the evening —excellent horse-master as he was—he had seen him stabled and fed. Later that evening he had him re-saddled for a secret expedition he had in mind, and on which he rode with no companion but his orderly. He had invented some pretext for getting his secretary (Lord Fitz Roy Somerset) out of the way, and had eluded all his aides-de-camp. The Duke gave as his reason for this secrecy, that had his intention been known to his staff they would have tried to dissuade him from his rather hazardous adventure. So he rode the twelve miles to Wavre in the dark dead night, and

[1] "Half the fine ladies of my acquaintance," said the Duke, "upon this occasion have got bracelets or lockets made from his mane or tail."



"COPENHAGEN" AND HIS TOMB.

two miles farther on to find Blucher's quarters. There he got the much-wished-for promise of support, and an idea of the hour he might expect the Prussians to arrive upon the field. Again he mounted Copenhagen and rode him back, twenty-eight miles in all; but so little was the game horse upset by his day's work that he lashed out at the Duke in the stable with as much vigour as if he had been there for a couple of days. "Remember, gentlemen," went on the Duke, "he had been out with me on his back for upwards of ten hours, and had carried me eight-and-twenty miles besides. I call that bottom! Ey?" And he rode the same gallant beast all through the battle from dawn to dark next day.

If we accept this story, and there are no doubt some grounds for crediting it, we must also believe that an incident occurred on the way back that might have had the most disastrous consequences. "On my ride homewards," said the Duke, "it was so dark that I fell into a deepish dyke by the roadside, and if it had not been for my orderly's assistance I doubt if I should have got out. Thank God there was no harm done either to horse or man." It is so impossible to conjecture what would have followed if the Duke had been lost or disabled that night, that we are brought at once

face to face with our chief difficulty in regard to the whole of this extraordinary story. It is indeed impossible to believe that Wellington—the man upon whom was laid so terrible a responsibility, who was so fully and rightly conscious that he alone could direct the coming fight with reasonable hope of success—would run the risk of this long and perilous midnight ride. It is no answer to say that he was a splendid and untiring horseman ; that he made nothing of such journeys in the Peninsula ; that this strong, self-reliant, vigorous soldier thought only of satisfying himself on a most momentous point on the eve of a desperate struggle. All that he might have felt, but he could never surely forget that he was too valuable to the cause, too precious to wander off even in search of this vital assurance. He had a dozen agents, confidential and completely trustworthy, whom he could despatch to Blucher. On the whole—even laying Wellington's denial on one side (for with age his memory became defective), and after giving due weight to the evidence, which, although striking and plausible, is not direct, but based only on the hearsay of the witnesses —the story must be disbelieved. It is unquestionable that, if really true, it must have come out much sooner, and in a much more definite way. There was no earthly reason for secrecy after the event ;

certainly not on the part of the Prussians, some of whom must undoubtedly have heard the fact from Blucher—yet in none of the German records is there the slightest reference to it. Ingenious as are the arguments adduced, those to the contrary, as well as the negative arguments, are to most minds overwhelming;[1] not the least strong among the latter being the absence of any reference to the ride in Lord Stanhope's conversations with the Duke. An incident of the kind would surely have been *approfondi* by that most Boswellian of modern reporters, who pursued Wellington (much to his discomfiture) everywhere note-book in hand.

[1] Lord Wolseley, with whom I have often discussed this question, and at great length, is unhesitatingly against the story. Yet he gave me two new, and to some extent interesting, facts regarding it. The first, that he was offered by a clergyman in Ireland a fac-simile letter written by the aide-de-camp who accompanied the Duke in his ride; but the letter was never really produced, while, as will be seen in the text, it is an integral part of the story that no one went with Wellington except his orderly. This also seems to dispose of another assertion, that Lord Bathurst rode with Wellington to Wavre. He had dined with the Duke, and it is said they started together, probably by sundown, some one lending Lord Bathurst a cloak, which a recent correspondent of a military paper declares is still treasured by the family as a relic of the great day.

The second fact would be of the utmost importance if quite clearly substantiated. One of Lord Wolseley's aides-de-camp in Ireland was Captain the Hon. Richard Somerset, grandson of Lord Raglan, whose sisters (Captain Somerset's grand-aunts) were still alive at the time the story of the Wavre ride was revived. On reference to these ladies they expressed the utmost astonishment that there should be any doubt on the subject. Their brother, Lord Fitz Roy Somerset, always firmly believed in the visit to Blucher. It is very possible, however, that the Ladies Somerset were talking of the visit paid before Ligny, during the 16th June.

CHAPTER XIV

WATERLOO

Wellington relies on Blucher—Grouchy's misdirection—Napoleon's confidence—"Ces Anglais! Enfin je les tiens"—Wellington's position—Napoleon's plan of attack—He takes a fixed post—Wellington moves everywhere—The five phases of the battle—Reille attacks Hougoumont—Ney's attack of centre and left—Ney's renewed attack on centre—The cavalry attack—Attack by Imperial Guard—Pressure of Prussian advance severely felt—The last attack repulsed—Defeat all along the line—Wellington's general good fortune.

WELLINGTON, then, awaited the French onslaught at Waterloo with calm fortitude. He knew that he could count upon Blucher, that Blucher would keep his promise, and he hoped to be able to hold out until that promise was fulfilled. The co-operation of the Prussians was not a rescue (as some have pretended), a happy chance without which defeat was inevitable, but a planned and concerted movement without which Wellington would not have fought at all. Napoleon, on the other hand, never seems to have anticipated this combined action of the allies. Had this been so, he must have drawn Grouchy to him by earlier and more definite orders,

and he would not have delayed his attack at Waterloo until nearly noon. Of Grouchy's mistakes and misconceptions, his neglect whether to intercept the advancing Prussians or to manœuvre towards Napoleon, to work towards the guns, it is unnecessary to speak here. History now unhesitatingly condemns him as a proximate if not a chief cause of the Emperor's overthrow.

The mere fact that Wellington stood firm might have warned Napoleon that Blucher was coming. He cannot have realised it or he would undoubtedly have begun the battle sooner, say between eight and nine in the morning, when the rain had ceased. With these three hours in hand he would have forestalled Blucher's march; the crisis of the battle would have arrived so much earlier, Wellington might have been beaten before the Prussians made themselves felt upon the left flank. But Napoleon was in no hurry. He was too full of confidence, too sanguine of victory. He was so sure of having only the Anglo-Dutch army to fight, that he deliberately postponed attacking it until he could do so in the most approved style.[1] His only fear was lest his enemy should have decamped, and dreading this, was up and on the move during the night; but the bivouac fires reassured him, and he

[1] Rope's "Campaign of Waterloo," p. 294.

found by daylight that the English were still there. "I never was so pleased," he said afterwards at St. Helena, "as when I saw Wellington intended to fight. . . . I had not a doubt of annihilating his army . . . when I found he gave me battle singly. I felt confident of his destruction." That morning at breakfast the Emperor said to several general officers present: "The enemy's army is superior in numbers to ours by about a fourth; nevertheless we have at least ninety chances in our favour and not ten against us." Then they burst in with the news that Wellington was "not simple enough to wait, that his columns were in full retreat." "You are mistaken," replied Napoleon, "he is no longer in time; he would expose himself to certain destruction; the dice have been thrown, and the chances are in our favour." Now General Foy, who had seen many hotly contested fields in the Peninsula, ventured to protest with, "Sire, les Anglais en duel c'est le diable," and was silenced angrily. What was uppermost in Napoleon's mind at that early hour survived to a later; he was still confident when Soult urged that it was useless to try to break the English squares with cavalry, and he answered rudely, "Vous croyez Wellington grand homme parce qu'il vous a toujours battu."

As the certainty of conflict approaching was clearly seen, Napoleon desired his troops to breakfast and clean their pieces, and dictated the orders which brought the army into line. He had time in plenty to spare, as he thought, and he decided that his forces should march into their positions surrounded with all the pomp and circumstance of war. Column followed column, and squadron squadron, with drums beating and colours flying—a truly magnificent spectacle. "The earth seemed proud," he boasted, "to bear so many brave men." By 10 A.M. his dispositions were completed. His army was drawn up in battle array upon a series of gentle slopes trending northward; his right at Frischermont, his centre at Belle-Alliance, his left upon the Nivelles-Louvain road. D'Erlon and Reille were in the front line, their infantry in two lines supported by the corps cavalry in three lines on each flank. Lobau's corps was on the left of Belle-Alliance, in rear of the centre; behind Lobau was the Imperial Guard. Kellermann's and Guyot's cavalry supported Reille; Milhaud's and Lefebvre-Desnouettes' supported D'Erlon.

And now Napoleon, amid enthusiastic greetings, rode slowly along his lines, passing every unit in review. Full of elation at the triumph he so confidently expected, he is reported to have

stretched forth towards his opponents and cried, "Ces Anglais! Enfin je les tiens!"

Meanwhile *ces Anglais*, with their friends and allies, had been still earlier afoot. Wellington, on "Copenhagen," was on the move soon after daylight, riding hither and thither through the length and breadth of his army. His position was astride of the great highway to Brussels (which nearly bisected it), upon a ridge of low hills running east and west, with a long slope to the southward towards the French. The summit of the ridge throughout its length was a narrow plateau traversed from end to end by the road to Wavre. On the right the hills bulged rather forward, then curved inwards slightly to the centre, and again advanced a little on the left. Three salient outposts or advanced points added greatly to the strength of the position: on the right were the chateau, farm, and orchards of Hougoumont, in the centre the farm of La Haye Sainte; on the left was a clump of homesteads about Papelotte and La Haye. The whole formed a compact and advantageous position, having, says Hooper, "a slope in front offering an obstacle to an assailant, a slope in rear concealing the strength and disposition of an army from his view, and free and complete means of communication with every part."

While the French were moving noisily into their places, the allies fell into line quietly and with but little show. The Guards were on the right of the first line above Hougoumont; somewhat to their right rear was Mitchell's brigade, a part of the 2nd corps which under Lord Hill occupied Braine l'Alleud and protected that right flank for which Wellington was so solicitous up to the last. Next to the Guards came Alten's division, the left of which rested on the Brussels road. On the right of it was Picton's division, with Bylandt's brigade of Dutch Belgians deployed in front. The extreme left was filled up by Vandeleur and Vivian's brigade of light cavalry. The remaining five brigades of cavalry, including the Household Brigade under Lord Edward Somerset and the Union Brigade under Sir William Ponsonby, was formed in a second line. Behind both lines were the reserves, all save Lambert's brigade and some Dutch cavalry west of the Nivelles road. They consisted of the 2nd or Clinton's division, the German legion, Hanoverians, and Adams' British brigade. Beyond them were the Brunswickers, beyond these Chassé's Dutch Belgians, reaching a hand towards Colville, who with his division was kept far off to the right at Hal and Tubize. Part of the artillery was posted along the ridge—thirty guns to the right,

twenty-six to the left of the Charleroi road; the rest were in reserve. In the most advanced front Hougoumont was held by a mixed detachment of Nassauers, Brunswickers, and the light companies of Maitland's brigade of Guards; a weak battalion of Germans occupied La Haye Sainte, and Perpoucher's division was posted in La Haye and the hamlets around.

Wellington's chief strength, it will be perceived, lay to his right; he feared most for this flank from first to last. His centre and left were weaker, no doubt, because he expected reinforcements on this side from Blucher's rapidly advancing columns. It was to Napoleon's advantage that his adversary looked for attack on his right—a potent reason for attacking elsewhere. There were others. Success upon the English right would have driven Wellington upon Blucher across the high-road to Brussels. Success in the centre and left would have forced the allies more and more widely apart, and Wellington must have retired towards the sea, leaving the approaches to the capital open and exposed. Hence Napoleon decided for the latter course. He decided to throw the whole weight of D'Erlon's corps upon the English centre and left, preluding his advance by a fierce attack on Hougoumont to divert Wellington's attention to

that side. Having thus matured his plan, Napoleon took up his position on a knoll named Rossomme, situated on the main road a mile or so to the rear of La Belle Alliance. Wellington had no fixed post during the action. He rode from point to point wherever and whenever his presence seemed most required, freely exposing himself, and running repeated risks.

There were five principal phases or episodes in the battle of Waterloo, and we shall best follow the course of events upon this hard-fought day by briefly describing each as it came on. In all five the French acted on the offensive. The first was the attack on Hougoumont ; the second, an attack on centre and left ; the third, Ney's renewed attack on the centre ; the fourth, the great cavalry effort ; the fifth and last, the grand but disastrous advance of the Imperial Guard.

1. Reille was entrusted with the assault of Hougoumont. The first gun was fired at twenty minutes past eleven. "There it goes!" said an old Peninsular veteran to a comrade, as he took out his watch and noted the opening of the ball. The French columns—Jerome's division—came on with great resolution, but made little impression. Foy's division followed, and the gallant garrison were compelled to fall back upon the main buildings

with their loopholed walls. Then by successive outflanking movements the French skirmishers gained the orchards, and almost made good their entrance to the château and farm. But Wellington, who watched the struggle closely, sent aid in small but effective detachments just where required. Gradually the French drew off, having suffered severely. The diversion had altogether failed to induce Wellington to draw off troops from his centre for the reinforcement of the point so seriously assailed on the right. It was about this time that the Prussians began to show themselves upon the heights of St. Lambert, far away to the east. Napoleon was long in doubt whether these distant troops were friends or foes. Presently intercepted despatches revealed the startling fact that this was the advanced guard of Bulow's corps. Napoleon saw his danger, and called on Grouchy for immediate help. That general was directed, in a letter which did not reach him till far too late in the evening, to intercept the Prussians and manœuvre towards Napoleon at once. At the same time Lobau's corps, hitherto held in reserve behind La Belle Alliance, was sent out to cover the right flank of the French position.

2. Meanwhile Ney, "bravest of the brave," Napoleon's most intrepid lieutenant, had been

Sir Thos. Picton. G.C.B.

organising the second or main attack, to the eastward of the Charleroi road. D'Erlon's corps was formed in columns of attack behind a grand battery of guns. Under cover of their fire the French advanced. Picton held this part of the ridge with the brigades of Kempt and Pack both deployed in line, their numbers some three thousand, but all somewhat withdrawn, and more or less concealed from view amongst the tall crops hereabouts heavy in the ear. Donzelet's brigade, attacking La Haye Sainte and the ridge above, had almost made good its footing on the plateau when Picton brought Kempt's men up at a run. A sharp conflict ensued; the British bayonet did its work, and the French were driven backward down the slope, but not before they had inflicted serious loss. The gallant English general, Sir Thomas Picton, was amongst those who fell, shot right through the head. Farther to the right of Donzelet the French brigades of Quiot and Marcognet had also achieved a temporary success. But they suffered severely at the hands of a part of Pack's brigade; and now the cavalry supports of this part of the line came into action under Wellington's personal instructions, with tremendous effect. Sir William Ponsonby, with the Union Brigade, the Royal Dragoons, the Inniskillings, and the Scots Greys, came up at a

gallop, and charging home, carried everything before him. Another cavalry combat was occurring on the other side of the road; for they had brought up a strong body of Cuirassiers to support Donzelet's attack, and Lord Uxbridge had launched the Household Brigade against them. The British heavy cavalry overbore the French, and the whole sweeping into the valley, joined with those pursuing the discomfited French infantry in filling the whole space with a confused and struggling mass of fighting men. During this period the work was almost all hand to hand. Innumerable single combats occurred, and here Shaw, the famous Life Guardsman, after displaying tremendous prowess, lost his life. Presently bodies of fresh French cavalry were brought up to make head against our impetuous dragoons. These in their turn were driven back, and under cover of this success the crushed and shattered columns of D'Erlon's discomfited corps were withdrawn to re-form. The second attack, like the first, had signally failed.

3. The third episode was a fresh advance, and a still more resolute attempt to pierce the British centre. It was to be carried out in concert with Piré, whose light cavalry was to menace the extreme right on the Nivelles road; and the attack upon Hougoumont, seconded now by artillery, was

to be renewed. Both sides now drew upon their reserves. The Imperial Guard was brought up to fill the gap left by Lobau, who was by this time in battle order on the right rear; Wellington also closed in his left, and strengthened it by placing Lambert's brigade behind Kempt's. The principal effort of the French was now directed to La Haye Sainte, which Donzelet and Quiot's brigade once more attacked with persistent courage. They gained their point at last, and this great advantage to the French was the critical moment of the day. Had Ney been strong in fresh and untouched infantry to improve the occasion, the fate of the day might have been changed. Napoleon himself was unwilling as yet to use up his *corps d'élite*, the renowned Imperial Guard. He was satisfied, therefore, to follow up the capture of La Haye Sainte by a grand attack of cavalry alone.

4. The corps of Milhaud and Lefebvre-Desnouettes, supported by the light cavalry of the Guard, were for the purpose; a splendid body of horse, cuirassiers, lancers, and chasseurs, five thousand strong, filling all the space between Hougoumont and the Charleroi road. Ney led them to the front. The British infantry formed square to receive them—small compact bodies so resolute and firm that the cavalry could make absolutely

no impression. The withering cross fire of these "living fortresses" emptied the horsemen's saddles, shaking the squadrons to pieces, and stoutly defying attack. Ney's fierce valour rose always with disaster. Twice foiled, a third time he led the Frenchmen on, only to fail again. He called up fresh supports—Guyot's brigade of grenadiers, the dragoons of the Guard; Napoleon sent forward Kellermann's corps, four or five thousand fresh sabres, to his aid. The whole of the French cavalry (Piré only excepted), the corps of Milhaud (that is to say, Desnouettes, Kellermann, Guyot, Jacquinot, Sobervie, Domont) were now hotly engaged. It was a supreme effort, as heroically executed as it was boldly conceived. "No scene like it," says Hooper, "is recorded in the annals of war. . . . They (the French horsemen) behaved with conspicuous bravery, but although they charged at the squares, approached, cut at the bayonets with their sabres, and thrust at the front files with their lances, it is recorded that they did not in any case charge home. The squares beat them off, slew them, killed their horses, and threw them again into confusion." The struggle lasted for nearly an hour, and then the French cavalry fell back discomfited and repulsed at every point.

5. It was now past 5 P.M. Three more hours

of daylight remained, and there was still time to organise fresh efforts. Both sides were severely shaken, but full of fighting still. Ney, eager to go again to the front, sent to his chief for more infantry to renew the attack. "De l'infanterie," angrily replied Napoleon to Ney's messenger, "ou voulez-vous que j'en prenne? Voulez-vous que j'en fasse?" The fact was that he began to seriously feel the pressure of the advancing Prussians. Blucher himself had come up to take command of Bulow's corps, and was forcing Lobau to retire. Napoleon was becoming anxious lest his right flank and rear should be compromised. It was necessary to reinforce Lobau with strong detachments; Duchesne, therefore, with the young Guard, joined him, and three battalions of the old Guard and several guns. These sufficed for the moment to beat back the Prussians, and Napoleon, who still thought he had to do only with Bulow's corps and not with three-fourths of the Prussian army, turned his attention once more to the front. He was resolved to use all the means at his disposal in one grand and final effort to crush his obstinate foe. He had his last reserve, the Imperial Guard; on what could Wellington rely? Wellington had reserves too, but he counted still more upon the promised co-operation of the Prussians, who must

at this time be close at hand. As we have seen, Bulow had already arrived, and the whole indeed would have been up much earlier in the day but for the conflagration in the town of Wavre, which checked the march of Blucher's columns. Napoleon in person superintended the arrangements for the last attack. He harangued the Imperial Guard, and rode with them a little way out before entrusting the leadership to Ney.

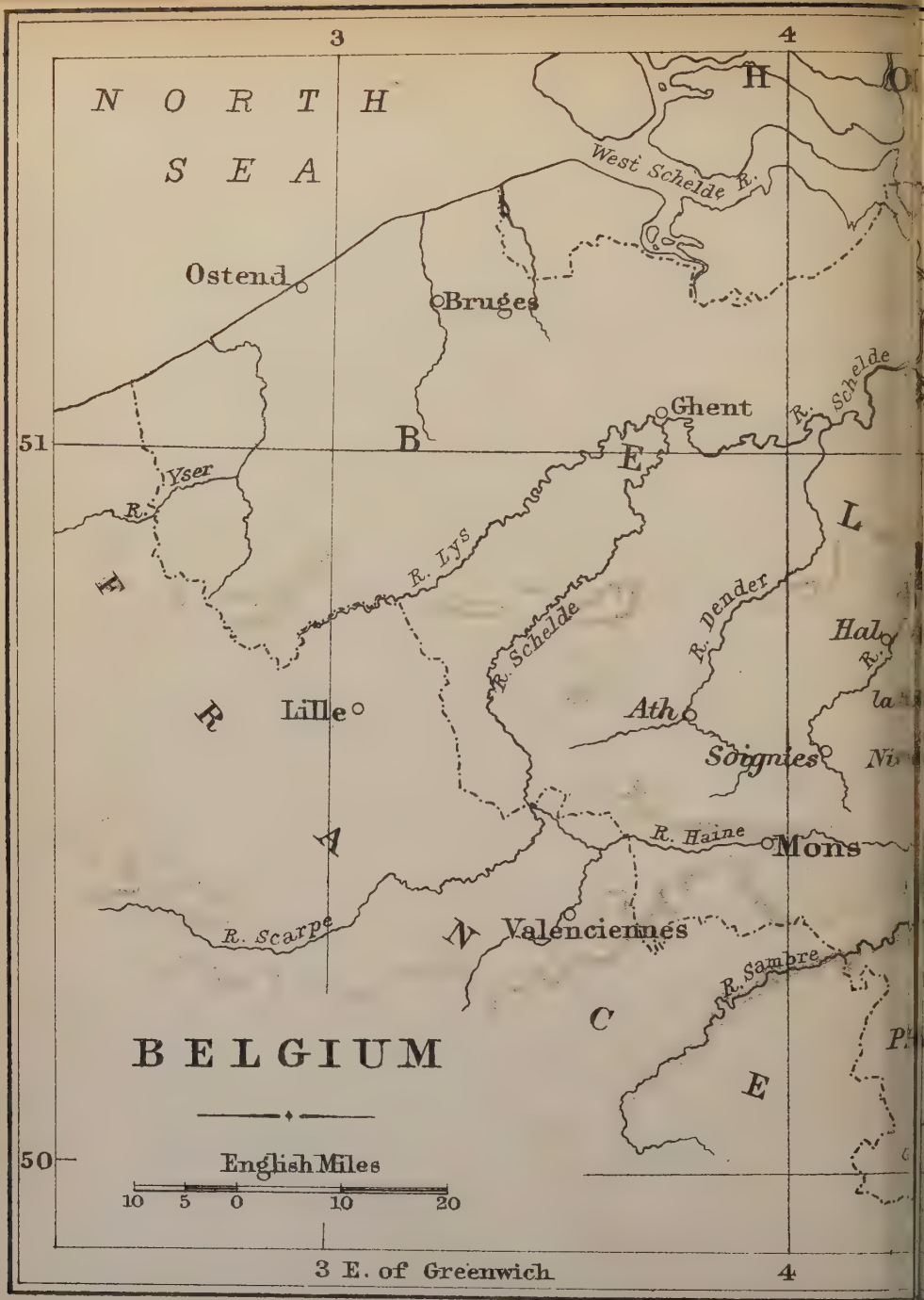
They were formed in two columns of only four battalions each, as twelve were facing the Prussians. The right column moved a little ahead of the left; the direction of both was against the British right centre. Already the battle had been renewed along the whole line. Divisions and brigades once more assailed positions they had previously attacked in vain; there was a hot artillery fire from guns pushed well to the front, and the cavalry was close at hand to follow up any advantage gained. On the English side, Wellington, feeling easy for his left, which the Prussians assured, had drawn the best part of his strength towards his right. He brought up Chassé's division and the Brunswick battalions, which fell into line between Halkett and Kielmansegge, while Vivian and Vandeleur with their cavalry brigades formed up behind in second line. The same garrison held Hougoumont, backed

H. W. Pickersgill, pinx. *Art Reproduction Co., sc.*

LORD SEATON.

by detachments of guards and three English regiments. Upon the interior slope Maitland's guards were held intact and unseen, so was the light infantry brigade which prolonged the line on their right. Much sharp fighting ensued before the great and final attack was delivered. The right column of the Imperial Guard was still leading, and bore directly upon the point behind which the English Guards were concealed. Swept and torn by artillery fire, losing many of its generals—Ney dismounted, but still leading on foot—the column pressed gallantly on. Just as they crowned the ridge the Duke cried to Maitland's men, "Up, Guards, and make ready!" The effect was electrical. The French Guards were altogether taken aback. They could not deploy; every shot from this wide front of fire told direfully upon the dense column; and when it wavered, as it soon did, Wellington gave the order to charge. The French could not withstand the onslaught, and almost immediately broke and fell away. For a time it fared better with the second or left column, which, undismayed by the overthrow of the first, continued to press forward. This had now to deal with Maitland's brigade, and bravely it kept on its way, when Colborne with the 52nd, happily inspired by a stroke of genius, wheeled his line to the left, and

poured in such a murderous fire that the French column was reduced to an "unsteady crowd." Then the 52nd, supported by the 71st and 95th, charged nobly, and the second column of the Guard was also overthrown. From this moment the issue of the battle was no longer in doubt. The failure and retreat of the Imperial Guard ruined the chances of the French attack on every side. They withdrew from all parts, hotly pressed, especially by the light troops and the cavalry. Napoleon, who had been active in these last encounters, rallied the Guard on the west of Belle-Alliance, but on the approach of the advancing British they again retired. There was a struggle between the English and French cavalry, in which the latter were worsted and joined in the general rout. The French about Planchenoit long showed a firm front, but they were presently outflanked and outnumbered by the Prussians, and also took flight. The French army was now *en pleine déroute.* Napoleon's single line of retreat was crowded, "blocked up by the wreck of the baggage, and a struggling, terrified, shouting mob, the wreck of that splendid host he had marshalled so arrogantly in the morning." For the Emperor all was lost. He was at Charleroi next day at dawn, and three days later in Paris.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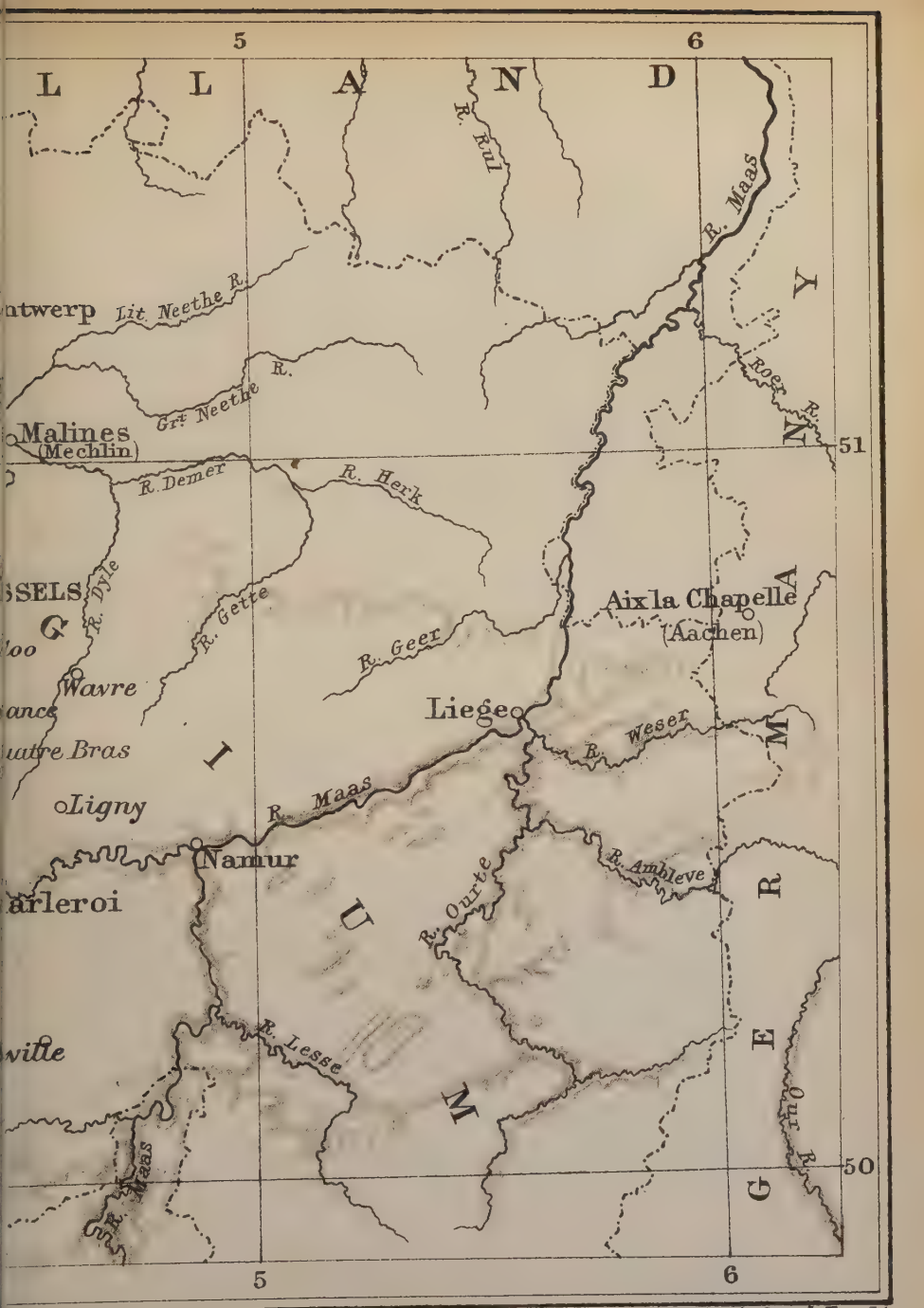

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CHAPTER XV

AFTER THE BATTLE

Wellington and Napoleon compared—The so-called "surprise"—Result of Grouchy's absence from the field—Wellington as a tactical leader—Waterloo "hard pounding"—A battle of giants—Luck.

THERE can be no doubt," says Shaw Kennedy, "that so long as history is read, the battle of Waterloo will be much and eagerly discussed;" that so long as the art of war is studied, the great features of Waterloo and its most important details will interest and occupy military men. The greatest commander has been well defined as he who makes fewest mistakes. Napoleon and Wellington both erred in the campaign and battle of Waterloo, but they should be compared by their merits, not their defects. Napoleon's strategy was no doubt superior to Wellington's, his general views were more correct and sound; but Wellington was better in execution. "The blunders and looseness of Napoleon's movements on the 16th, 17th, and 18th June were surpassingly great and numerous; while Wellington

acted with unerring energy, firmness, and precision."[1] Wellington, again, was more active at the battle; he personally and more largely controlled its tactics. Wherever he was most wanted, at any critical moment, on any decisive point, Wellington appeared to judge for himself and deal most effectively with the situation. Napoleon trusted to his staff; he remained chiefly on one spot, and there awaited the reports of others before he gave his orders to meet the constantly changing aspects of the fight.

Although Napoleon did not actually surprise the allies[2] in the initial movement, the early honours

[1] Shaw Kennedy, p. 176.

[2] When the Duke of Wellington was sitting for his portrait to Pickersgill, the painter asked him if it was true that he was surprised at the outset of the Waterloo campaign. "I was never surprised till this moment," replied his Grace.

This story of the "surprise" seems to have originated with a great personage, no other than His Royal Highness the Duke of York, whose hostility to Wellington amounted to malevolence, and is supposed to have grown out of personal resentment that Wellington was preferred before him in the command of the army in the Peninsula. The pretension was preposterous, of course, for the Duke of York's qualification as a general was absolutely contemptible, yet it was advanced; and his disappointment explains much of the pettiness exhibited to the great soldier he would have superseded. Greville in his Memoirs (June 24, 1821) tells us in so many words that "the Duke of York's prejudice against Wellington is exceedingly strong. He does not deny his military talents, but thinks that he is false and ungrateful, that he never gave sufficient credit to his officers, and that he was unwilling to put forward men of talent who might be in a situation to claim some show of credit, the whole of which he was desirous of engrossing himself. He says that at Waterloo he got into a scrape, and allowed himself to be surprised, and he attributes in a great measure the success of that day to Lord Anglesea,

of the campaign were undoubtedly his. On the 16th June he had already reaped the full benefit of his strategy, and the game for a time seemed quite within his hands. His crowning error followed quickly on his first success; and that was in not falling upon Wellington with his whole strength directly after Ligny. He was wrong in detaching Grouchy, even if right in principle, as he afterwards claimed, on the ground that Blucher when re-formed could have cut into his communications; for with Grouchy he would have greatly outnumbered the Anglo-Dutch, and if he could beat them he need have no more fear of Blucher. He should have led against them "every man and every horse, even if the risk had been great in the highest degree, which . . . it clearly was not."[1] That Grouchy disappointed him, that if his tardy lieutenant had manœuvred towards the sound of guns Waterloo might still have been saved, does not alter the assertion that the original error was Napoleon's own.

who, he says, was hardly mentioned, and that in the coldest terms, by the Duke's despatch."

The suggestion that Lord Uxbridge won the battle is delicious, and almost parallels the pretension advanced in late years by George IV. that he was at Waterloo. "I have often heard your Majesty say so," was the Duke's evasive reply when appealed to in confirmation of this amusing assertion.

[1] Shaw Kennedy.

Wellington's chief strategical error, that of clinging too tenaciously to his right flank, has been commented upon already. He was wrong also in agreeing with Blucher to meet Napoleon so far to the front at Fleurus and Quatre Bras, at points where their own concentration could only take place later than that of the enemy who threatened them. On the tactical field he was most to blame for his neglect to hold on at all costs to La Haye Sainte,[1] the outpost in front of his left centre, the importance of which Napoleon clearly saw, and which did pass at one time into the hands of the French. This was the supreme moment of the battle, and never perhaps did Wellington show to greater advantage as a tactical leader than in his quiet self-possessed treatment of this dangerous emergency. The danger was imminent: La Haye Sainte was lost; there was a gap in the line; it was open between Halkett's[2] Hanoverians and Kempt's brigade on the left or east side of the great Nivelles-Brussels road. Shaw Kennedy took this startling news to the Duke, who received it with the most perfect coolness, and replied with great firmness and precision. "I shall order up the

[1] See ante, p. 164. That La Haye Sainte was not strengthened and occupied with sufficient garrison was the fault of the English staff, but Wellington always accepted the blame.

[2] He had been brought from the right an hour before.

Brunswickers and other troops. Go you," he said to Shaw Kennedy, "and get all the German troops you can to the spot, and all the guns you can find." This was no doubt the hour of greatest peril, when defeat was within measurable distance; and with a less self-reliant leader all would have been lost. But Wellington came up quickly at the head of the Brunswick troops; he was soon backed by Kielmansegge and Vivian's cavalry, while the artillery with their fire covered the opening. The ground was held, the day was saved, by the man who "managed his reserves in a steady yet energetic and masterly manner, . . . who was eminent on this great day of trial for coolness, judgment, and energy in doing everything that the urgencies of the action required at the proper time."[1]

In his own simple and modest account of the action, he lays no claim to having personally controlled it or contributed to the victory. "People ask me to describe Waterloo," he said to Sir John Malcolm, in Paris, soon after the battle. "I tell them it was hard pounding on both sides, and we pounded the hardest. There was no manœuvring. Bonaparte kept up his attacks, and I was glad to let it be decided by the troops." There is another version of this account as given by Wellington to

[1] Shaw Kennedy, p. 126.

a lady of fashion: "We pummelled them and they pummelled us, and I suppose we pummelled the hardest, so we gained the day." "It was a battle of giants!" he said on another occasion. "Many of my troops were new; but the new fight well though they manœuvre ill—better perhaps than many have fought and bled. As to the way in which some of our ensigns and lieutenants braved danger—the boys just come from school—it exceeds belief. They ran as at cricket." Again: "Waterloo was won in the playing fields of Eton."

I may be permitted here, at the close of Wellington's active service in the field, to lay some stress upon a point that has hardly been sufficiently considered when dealing with his military career. Wellington's good luck has never yet been recognised as an important factor in his success. I mention it in no disparagement of his great and enduring reputation. Another great soldier, his greatest opponent, was proud to acknowledge that he fought under a fortunate star;[1] to be lucky is indeed of the first and last importance in the greatest of all games of chance. "Est-il heureux?" was the first question Napoleon asked in inquiring

[1] Marmont said at Fuente Guinaldo (see post, p. 214) that bright as was Napoleon's star, Wellington's outshone it.

into the qualifications of his generals for command. Wellington was undoubtedly a lucky man, not only in that immunity from mishap, that continual escape from serious wounds, that his unhesitating personal exposure made constantly possible, but in the larger fortune that attended him in the general conduct of operations.

As regards bodily and personal risks, he passed scatheless through many. The man who was nearly drowned on his second voyage to Lisbon, in 1809, when H.M.S. *Surveillante* was all but shipwrecked on the coast of the Isle of Wight, escaped serious wounds on several occasions, and more than once was nearly taken prisoner. The day before Talavera he had climbed into an old ruined house, leaving his horse below, when a rapid advance of the enemy barely gave him time to remount and gallop away. In the movements before Salamanca, a small detachment of French dragoons charged two of our guns, escorted by cavalry, with much gallantry, just as Wellington was passing near. The guns were limbered up and passing to the rear; there was a fierce encounter, in which the French overthrew our dragoons and drove them back past Wellington, who was enveloped in the mêlée. The Duke was in the thick of it, and had a very narrow escape, being obliged

to draw his sword and fight his way out with the rest of his staff. At Echalar, in 1813, when pursuing Soult's rear-guard under Clausel, Wellington rode to the front reconnoitring, escorted by half a company of the 43rd. The French saw them, and sent a party to cut them off, which would infallibly have fallen upon Wellington just as he was examining his maps, had not a smart and intelligent sergeant, Blood, who was on the look-out, descried the enemy's approach. Blood, "with surprising activity, leaping rather than running down the precipitous rocks," gave Wellington notice; but the French arrived in time to send a volley after him as he galloped away. At Quatre Bras he was nearly ridden down by Piré's chasseurs, and only escaped by calling upon some of the 92nd Highlanders, who were lining a ditch, to lie down while he jumped his horse over them. At Salamanca a bullet perforated Wellington's cloak as it lay folded in front of him on his saddle. At Orthez a round shot cut the bough of a tree just over his head, two bullets passed through his clothes; another, in the same battle, struck him in the groin and knocked him from his horse. Alava, who was with him, thought he was killed. He had been laughing the moment before at an expression which had been explained to him, of a Spanish soldier

who had said he was "*ofendido*" (slightly hurt), and now cried, as he jumped again to his feet, that he was only "*ofendido*." At Waterloo he carried his life in his hand, but was never touched, although the casualties among those about him were terrible. Colonel De Lancey, quartermaster-general, was mortally wounded; so was Colonel Alexander Gordon. Colonel Canning was killed outright; Lord Uxbridge lost his leg by Wellington's side.[1] Lord Fitz Roy Somerset was wounded in the arm, which was afterwards amputated. In the cavalry attack upon the squares the fire was exceedingly hot, and he was warned by Sir Colin Campbell, one of his staff, that it was no place for him, he had better move; to which the Duke replied, "I will when I see those fellows off." Later, when Colonel Harvey protested that he was in great danger, Wellington replied, "Never mind, let them fire away; the battle's won, and my life is of no consequence now." Soon afterwards he was heading the pursuit, with but a single member of his staff left by his side.

In larger matters his good fortune was great. At Assaye, as we have seen, he found the ford he

[1] Every one probably knows the laconic force with which the sad news was imparted and received. "I've lost my leg, by G—d!" said the stricken man. "Have you, by G—d?" replied his imperturbable chief.

sought; but yet, if there had been none, his whole force must have been annihilated. At Busaco, Massena's jealousy of Ney postponed an immediate attack that promised enormous advantage, for Wellington was not yet concentrated. At Fuentes d'Onoro "there was not during the whole war a more perilous hour." Wellington's force was divided by river, and in a plain through which five thousand French horsemen careered unchecked was a "confused concourse" of small parties, piquets, and non-combatants, and only the slackness of the enemy saved this mob from destruction. At Fuente Guinaldo, Wellington lay with barely fifteen thousand men for thirty-six hours within cannon-shot of the whole French army. Marmont's mistake at Salamanca was another stroke of luck for Wellington. Again, in the retreat from Burgos, by an audacious movement, covered by fog and rain, he transported his whole army around Soult's left, but so close to his front that, if discovered, he would probably have been destroyed. It was immense good fortune, too, that Napoleon never came to oppose him in Spain; that he would have been worsted even then need not be taken for granted, but the Emperor in the heyday of his power would have been a far doughtier antagonist than any of his marshals. Last of all, luck played up

for Wellington at Waterloo. Soult's want of skill as chief of staff, Ney's ignorance of the forces entrusted to him, his dilatoriness, the conflicting orders given to D'Erlon, Napoleon's lack of promptitude after Ligny, Grouchy's mistaken mission and subsequent effacement, were so many boons and godsends contributing their quota to the sum total of Wellington's success.

CHAPTER XVI

LATER YEARS

Wellington's great popularity after Waterloo—His continued service of the State—Master-General—The Chartists—Saves army from extinction—Wrongly blamed for Crimean disasters—His political career—Prime Minister—The Reform Bill—His unpopularity—Last occasion on which he took office.

WELLINGTON may be said to have reached the zenith, he was at the very summit and apex of his career immediately after Waterloo. His popularity was unbounded. In Paris crowds followed him wherever he went; the universal excitement was extraordinary whenever he appeared; people jostled and hustled each other in their frantic eagerness to see this great hero, "a small man, plainly dressed in a blue frock-coat, white neckcloth, and round hat;" they almost kissed the ground at his horse's feet. He was all powerful in the councils of the nations, the arbiter of France's fate. It was his firmness and moderation, his wise judgment and convincing logic, that saved her from spoliation and dismemberment. It was well for her that England's great

representative was predominant, and strong enough to resist the revengeful desires of her other triumphant foes. He preserved the bridge of Jena[1] and the column of Austerlitz; he prevented the cessions of territory which would have made new wars inevitable; he fixed Louis XVIII. on the throne, not as the best sovereign possible, but the only one likely to ensure the future peace of Europe. To give effect to his views, and guarantee their execution, he devised the joint army of occupation, which conferred strength and security upon the new régime, and being terminable on a fixed date, kept France quiet meanwhile.

In 1818 the Duke returned to England, and accepted the post of Master-General of the Ordnance, an ancient and honourable office, that gave him a seat in the Cabinet as a military adviser. He fought no more in the field, although in his green old age he would have gladly accepted service in Afghanistan; and in the early days of the Sikh war he told Sir Charles Napier, "If you do not go, I must." His last military operation

[1] "About blowing up the bridge of Jena, there were two parties in the Prussian army (Gneisenau and Muffling) against, but Blucher violently for it. In spite of all I could do, he did make the attempt, even while, I believe, my sentinel was standing at one end of the bridge. But the Prussians had no experience in blowing up bridges. . . ." "They made a hole in one of the pillars, but their powder blew out instead of up, and, I believe, hurt some of their own people."—Wellington to Stanhope, p. 119.

was to concert measures for the defence of London against the Chartists in 1848, and his masterly arrangements for garrisoning the city saved it without the firing of a shot. He placed troops unseen in all commanding points, and was ready to act with decisive effect if the malcontents had risked a collision. From 1842 till his death he was commander-in-chief of the army, which he governed in its best interests, although he introduced no new system, was quite opposed indeed to reforms. For the latter he has been blamed, and it is so far true that he was to the last degree conservative, satisfied with existing methods, content to subordinate always the military to the civil power in the State. But while thus seeming to neglect it, he was defending the very existence of the army, threatened as it was by unsparing economists who would have made a clean sweep of it, and who continually attacked the Estimates. The Duke's best protection was to hide it out of sight, in the colonies, or distributed in small detachments at home. "He treated the army as a machine, to be taken to pieces and packed away in small pieces till it should be needed."[1] No doubt it followed that the higher tactical instruction was entirely neglected; there could be no practice in handling

[1] Hamley, "Wellington's Career," p. 107.

the three arms; the manœuvres of any but the smallest bodies was impossible.

The responsibility for the collapse of the army administrative departments in the Crimea has also been fixed upon the Duke of Wellington. There had been the same fatal defects in the Peninsular army at the outset, but he had conquered them by his own masterly power. If, however, "the perfected organisations by which Wellington had worked out his purpose were soon after destroyed —destroyed so completely that not even so much as the framework of his land transport system was left to show how in future our armies might be moved and supplied"[1]—was Wellington's the blame? His splendid talents had created means never before existent, services that were never part and parcel of our army system; "they formed no part of the mechanism by which England managed war business at any other times," and it was beyond his power to give them permanent life. At the same time, it is more than probable that he would have been more urgent for their continuance had not the drift towards economy and reduction been almost irresistible.

Although Wellington sheathed his sword, he did not cease to render loyal and most ungrudging

[1] Kinglake.

service to his country. He entered the arena of politics, and the impression prevails that, though a great administrator and a great statesman, he was not a great politician.[1] He was never, and could never have been, a party leader; he could not conduct party warfare; he was no party man. He was ever "guided by large principles of duty, disinterestedness, and perfect honesty," and he could never subordinate these to political exigencies; he was first and before everything a loyal and devoted servant of the Crown and the State. "He was pre-eminently a great national servant, always intent on promoting what, according to his cool judgment, was best for the common weal."

The earlier phases of his political career were certainly cast in troublous times. There was the quarrel between the king, George IV., and his queen, Caroline, in which the Duke spoke his mind to the king with noble directness.[2] There was constant effervescence on the Continent, wars and rumours of wars—the Greek revolt against Turkey,

[1] Hamley.

[2] There was a story current at the time of the Queen Caroline agitation which shows the Duke's grim humour. The mob were obliging every one who passed along a certain street to halt and repeat the words, "God bless Queen Caroline." The Duke's turn came, and he at once very sensibly acquiesced in the demand, but as he rode away he fired a parting shot. "God bless Queen Caroline," he said, quietly adding, "and may all your wives be like her."

the Holy Alliance, and the desire to interfere in the internal affairs of Spain. At home Wellington was called to high office, and became Prime Minister in 1828, although he did not seek it, and had said the year before that he should be "worse than mad to think of such a thing." He had to deal with some of the most momentous issues that have been raised in our political history. On the question of Catholic Emancipation he yielded at length, preferring to accept a measure against which he had really no prejudice rather than face a terrible civil war in Ireland. It was his concession on this point that led to his duel with Lord Winchelsea, who had accused him in a political pamphlet of being a papist in disguise. They met and exchanged shots on Battersea fields, but the Duke fired wide, and Winchelsea in the air. The Duke claimed satisfaction on public grounds; it was his duty to fight, he said, for the duel was a part of the Catholic question. When to these calumnies were added the constant conflicts with the king and his brothers, the struggle with Russian intrigues at the British Court, the dealing with people he disliked or despised, we may easily understand his passionate outburst of regret that he had ever accepted office. "If I had known in January 1828," he wrote in November 1829, "one

tithe of what I do now, and of what I discovered one month after I was in office, I should never have been the king's Minister, and should have avoided loads of misery. I believe there never was a man who suffered so much and for so little purpose."

A still greater trial was at hand. The vital question of Parliamentary Reform was forced into strong relief by the French Revolution of 1830, but Wellington could not see why the country should be dissatisfied with the state of representation. He was fully convinced, he told the Lords, that the country actually possessed a legislature which answered all good purposes of legislation, and in which it had full and entire confidence. Yet he would have transferred seats from the corrupt boroughs to the great towns. His objection to thorough-going reform was based on his belief that one of the foundation-stones of the constitution was land; for he could not see that "the pivot of power had at last begun to shift from land to trade, commerce, and industry, and that the claim of these to share in power could not be denied."[1] His opposition to the Reform Bill was therefore unflinching, and it gained him unmerited but widespread obloquy. The hero who a few years before had

[1] Hooper, 243.

been the idol of the nation was now hooted and hunted by the mob; his Apsley House, which he had acquired in the heyday of his glory, was attacked, and its windows broken; the Duke, riding home from the city, was chased, and only escaped under the escort of two courageous barristers. He never forgot these outrages, and when he once more regained his popularity he would not acknowledge the cheers of the fickle crowd, but pointed grimly to the iron shutters he had put up for the protection of his house.

At the worst hour, however, although he wore outwardly a perfectly placid and unruffled demeanour, he was terribly harassed and depressed by his political anxieties and the demeanour of the House of Commons; so much so, indeed, that he told Lord Stanley, "It is fortunate that I don't find a brace of loaded pistols by my side when I wake in the morning."

In the teeth of his strenuous opposition the Reform Bill was passed, and effected, as he thought, "the greatest revolution that ever occurred without bloodshed in any country." He had fought it, had helped to defeat it, had tried to form a Ministry to modify it, and finally determined to absent himself from the House when he saw that its passing could alone save the country from grave dissensions.

A promise had been exacted by Lord Grey from the king, that should the Lords again defeat the Bill he would create a number of new peers sufficient to outvote the Opposition. Wellington would not allow the king's prerogative to be attacked by a resolution condemning this creation, nor did he wish to see the House swamped and discredited. He preferred to abandon the fight with his followers, and thus, as the lesser of two great evils, surrendered his personal convictions for the common good. "No generous mind can study the story of the Reform Bill without recognising the honourable and manly conduct of a statesman whose first and last thought was for country and not for himself."[1]

Only once again did the Duke take political office. It was on the sudden dissolution of the Melbourne Ministry in 1834, when Wellington advised the king to send for Sir Robert Peel, who was then travelling in Italy. Until Peel could arrive the Duke agreed to discharge the whole duties of administration. He became First Lord of the Treasury and Home Secretary, the latter office, that of the Secretary of State, enabling him to act in all the others. For three weeks the Duke of Wellington was sole and absolute dictator, "an

[1] Hooper.

expedient of doubtful and anomalous character," says Sir Erskine May, but he adds that the Duke exercised the extraordinary powers entrusted to him with honour and good faith. He took all the responsibility and none of the patronage; proving himself once again the devoted public servant, ready to grapple with a great emergency, "who, suddenly finding the king without a government, at once supplied one in his own person."

When Peel returned the Duke went to the Foreign Office, and he was again a member of the Cabinet of 1841. But he gradually passed up above the cares of party warfare, and, except when he joined Peel in repealing the Corn Laws, took no active part in politics save as leader of the House of Lords. He held no civil office, but he was the universal counsellor, moderating opposition, helping Ministers, guiding his peers, and influencing public opinion for the good of the crown, the constitution, and the country.

CHAPTER XVII

PERSONAL TRAITS

Alleged hardness of nature—Yet a staunch friend to Fitz Roy Somerset; to Alexander Gordon—Severe treatment of Norman Ramsay and other artillery officers—Colonel Sturgeon—Said to have neglected old comrades—Proofs of his generosity—No sordid ideas about money—His charities—Story of the snuff-box; of the ball-room at Bath—His indefatigable labours to the last.

I HAVE dealt in an earlier page with the various features of Wellington's personal character, more especially as they were exhibited in the field, in the days of his military successes. It remains to complete the portraiture with some account of the man himself, supported by fuller and later evidence, and as he appeared and was known to his best friends. There is a tendency at this present time to rather dwarf his reputation. That he had weaknesses, defects; that he was of a hard nature, with no deep or extensive sympathies, "impervious to softer influences," unfeeling to the extent of ignoring natural family affections, unbending and implacable to those who offended him; that he forgot the services of his

London June 18 1838

My Dear Duke I return
my thanks for your beautiful
present; and still more for
your very kind Note

I send you a Memoir
of what I said to you on Saturday
but I was so overwhelmed
by my sense of your kindness
and by the presence of those
whom you brought with you; and
the recollection of old transactions
that I can scarcely recollect
what I said.

Believe me ever Yours most
sincerely Wellington

His Grace the Duke of Rutland

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON TO THE DUKE OF RUTLAND

June 18, 1838

officers, maligned the men who won his victories —such disagreeable traits as these have been so much put forward in recent years, and repeated with so many exaggerations, that it is to be feared the present estimate of Wellington by his countrymen is below his unquestioned merits and rights. It will be well to close this imperfect tribute to his conspicuous worth with some examination of these charges, and of the rebutting evidence that may be offered after a better acquaintance with his finer characteristics.

Greville is one of those who wrote Wellington down as a hard man, mainly because the son showed no ardent affection in after life for the mother who had neglected him in his youth. Lady Mornington could hardly look for great devotion from her son Arthur, from the ugly duckling whom she had despised, and who had blossomed so unexpectedly into fame. Nor can the Duke be greatly blamed for withholding his filial tenderness. But it is surely incorrect to say that he was without heart, although Gleig may go too far in claiming that "no more tender heart beat in a human bosom." Wellington was undemonstrative, cold and impassive outwardly, but within he was very different. "He has a short manner of speaking and a stern look that people mistake for want

of heart; but I have witnessed his kindness to others, and felt it in so many instances, and so strongly, that I cannot bear to hear him accused of wanting what I know he possesses," says one who was much thrown with him.[1] His extreme fondness for children bears out this view. He played and romped with them, and fought again his battles, suffering them to bombard him with cushions. Two children who were staying at Walmer complained that others got letters every morning, but that the bag brought them none. Whereupon the Duke with his own hand wrote one to each daily, which were delivered with the rest.

Undoubtedly, to his own comrades he was a good and staunch friend, kindly, considerate, something more than "not inhuman," as Hamley disparagingly puts it. He rode twenty miles after a hard day's fighting to visit the bedside of a wounded aide-de-camp, the son of his dearest friends, and stood there affected to tears when the case seemed hopeless. The commander, so fully occupied with momentous and immense transactions, could yet find time to write to parents and relatives breaking the sad news of the death or wounds of their belongings. When Lord Fitz Roy Somerset lost his right arm at Waterloo, his chief, with great delicacy

[1] "George Napier's Life," p. 168.

W. H. Ward & Co.

LORD RAGLAN.

and nice feeling, replaced him temporarily with a one-armed man, Colonel Felton Harvey, so as to assure his old military secretary that he might return when convalescent to his old post.[1] We have frequent outbursts of poignant grief in Wellington's correspondence at the heavy penalties paid for success. We owe to him the pregnant apothegm, "Nothing is more tragical than a victory, except a defeat." He was deeply affected by the loss of Alexander Gordon at Waterloo, and wrote to Lord Aberdeen: "The glory resulting from such actions, so dearly bought, is no consolation to me."

Dr. Hume, in whose arms Gordon expired at 3 A.M. the morning after Waterloo, woke the Duke to tell him the sad news. He sat up in bed, "his face covered with the dust and sweat of the previous day, and extended his hand to me, which I took and held in mine, whilst I told him of Gordon's death, and of such of the casualties as had come to my knowledge. He was much affected; I felt the tears dropping fast upon my hand, and looking towards him, saw them chasing one another in furrows over his dusty cheeks. He brushed them away suddenly with his left hand, and said to me,

[1] Lord Fitz Roy was so determined to return to his chief, and in the same capacity, that he devoted himself to writing with his left hand, and could soon do so with ease and clearness.

in a voice trembling with emotion, 'Well, thank God, I don't know what it is to lose a battle, but certainly nothing can be more painful than to gain one with the loss of so many of one's friends.'" Again, to the Duke of Beaufort: "The losses I have sustained have quite broken me down, and I have no feeling for the advantages we have acquired."

It is true that against this we have one or two well-authenticated cases of his harshness to officers who erred, and who came under his serious displeasure. His treatment of the gallant Norman Ramsay after Vittoria is quoted as a proof of Wellington's implacable nature. Ramsay, as second captain, had commanded Bull's famous battery of horse artillery at that battle, and at its close had carried his guns across hedges and ditches to bring them to bear upon the retreating enemy. Later in the day Wellington met him at a village far in advance, where he desired him to remain with his battery till he, Wellington himself, sent him his next orders. None reached Ramsay that night, and he believed that the obligation to stand fast was ended. Moreover, the quartermaster-general now desired him to rejoin the rest of the cavalry. So Ramsay moved off with his battery, and, when the Duke returned, was not to be found; he had become involved, too, in a difficult defile, and

being unable to extricate himself, was shut out from usefulness the whole of next day. Wellington was deeply incensed at what he deemed direct disobedience of the orders he had given personally, and he placed Norman Ramsay in arrest. Much sympathy was felt for the young artilleryman throughout the army, and strong intercession was made for him, especially by Sir Thomas Graham, but it only increased Wellington's irritation. Ramsay was kept in arrest a month, and then permitted to return to his battery. It is said that he never recovered the indignity, and gladly met his death at Waterloo at the head of his guns, behind Hougoumont.

Wellington is thought to have never been partial to artillery, or to have sufficiently acknowledged the support it gave him. It was a great grievance with the horse artillery that its services were not mentioned in the Waterloo despatch. Cavalié Mercer, in his journal, complains that his magnificent battery had hardly a word of commendation from the Duke, although it was all but destroyed during the action. We have also the story of the rockets with Whinyates' battery. The Duke did not believe in rockets much, and ordered that the tubes should be left behind at the base. When Sir George Wood pleaded hard, saying it

would break Whinyates' heart to lose his rockets, the Duke is reported to have replied angrily, "D——n his heart; let my orders be obeyed." This objection to rockets has been called "irrational prejudice against innovation." It was rather a dislike to experiment; the Duke preferred to depend upon what he had tried and knew to be trustworthy, and for this reason he was opposed to the arming of horse artillery with heavier guns; their work having been well done in Spain with six-pounders, he saw no necessity for nine. But it may be admitted that the Duke chafed much at artillery traditions, and thought little of the senior officers of artillery on his staff in Spain. This was shown by his advancement of a junior, whose value he had discovered, over the heads of all. Alexander Dickson, who had shown what he was worth with the artillery of the Portuguese army, and in the artillery business at all the great sieges, was put by Wellington in 1813 at the head of all his artillery. Dickson was then only a captain in the regiment, although a colonel by brevet, and he was practically holding a lieutenant-general's command —some 8000 men and 3500 horses.

One other instance must be given of Wellington's severity, but with the saving clause that it was surely well deserved. Colonel Sturgeon was

clearly entitled to sharp rebuke for neglect of duty after Orthez, although not perhaps in such unmeasured terms. Sturgeon was an officer of the staff corps, "a clear-headed officer," in whom Wellington had the highest confidence. He belonged to the quartermaster-general's department, and in the latter part of the Peninsular war was head of the post office, and in command of the corps of guides. Wellington after Orthez was most anxious to communicate the news to Hope, who was in charge of independent operations at Bayonne. When the officer who was to carry the despatches asked for guides, there were none forthcoming. Sturgeon had suffered them to wander abroad much as they pleased, and the urgent letter to Hope was delayed for several days. Wellington was furious, and vented it upon Sturgeon in so violent a manner, using such harsh expressions, that the poor man never lifted his head again. He was heart-broken, and only a few days later he sought death by riding alone in among the enemy's skirmishers, who soon shot him through the head. George Napier, who relates this incident, adds that Wellington felt this tragic ending very deeply, but he made no show of it or of his regrets. "He has always kept," writes George Napier, "to that system of never acknowledging he was wrong or mistaken."

Again, it is thrown in Wellington's teeth that he neglected his old companions in arms; that he was callous and indifferent to their hardships and grievances. Even Gleig, a nearly invariable panegyrist, remarks, that although he had a warm regard for them, he entered very little into the amenities of social life with them. "We have reason to believe that neither Lord Hill, nor Lord Raglan, nor Sir George Murray ever visited the Duke at Strathfieldsaye; nor could they or others of similar standing, such as Lord Anglesea, Sir Edward Paget, and Sir James Kempt, be reckoned among the habitués of his hospitable gatherings at Apsley House. The circle in which he chiefly moved was that of fashionable ladies and gentlemen." We have here, no doubt, the survival of the spirit that impelled him to have two sets of staff-officers in the Peninsula—the men who amused him and the men who did the work. He was never, perhaps, very intimate with his senior officers, as officers; they were never—and I may be forgiven the only word that will describe it—his "pals;" he never associated with them either in Spain or afterwards, probably because it consorted better with his ideas of command to fix a gulf between them and him, and in the after years it was never bridged over.

It is no doubt true that Wellington was slow to

admit the claims of those who had served with him to honours and rewards. He was averse to any general recognition of the kind; the Peninsular medal was not issued to the Peninsular army till some thirty years after the war; the grant had been steadfastly refused by the Duke, who himself wore almost every European decoration.[1] Yet he willingly stirred himself to secure the promotion of deserving officers, and not only his interest but his purse was always open to them. One or two little-remembered instances of the latter deserve to be recorded. The first is to be found in the Life of Lord Hill, when that gallant officer was suddenly summoned from Paris, in 1815, to attend to some pecuniary losses in England. When he applied for leave, stating his reasons, Wellington, in granting it, said he was "much concerned for the unfortunate circumstances that had occasioned the necessity for his return to England." Then he goes on: "In the existing state of public and private credit in England, I am apprehensive that you will find it difficult to procure the money which you will require. I have a large sum of money which is entirely at my command,[2] and I assure you that I could not apply it in a

[1] There is a room wholly lined with glass cases in Apsley House, all filled with ribands, and orders, and swords of honour.

[2] No doubt part of the Waterloo grant.

manner more satisfactory to me than in accommodating you, my dear Hill, to whom I am under so many obligations, and your father, for whom I entertain the highest respect, although I am not acquainted with him." The Duke asked only to be told if Hill found any difficulty in raising the money, when he would immediately put his man of business in communication with Lord Hill's.

The second instance was with Alava, the Spanish officer who was attached to his staff in Spain, and for whom he cherished a sincere regard. When, in the whirligig of Spanish political changes, Alava was exiled and came to England as a refugee, Wellington offered him a house rent free upon the Strathfieldsaye estate, with other pecuniary advantages. He went further, and introduced him to his bankers as his friend, emphasising the often empty expression, and stating that Alava was to be allowed to draw for what money he required. It is pleasant to know that Alava was loath to trespass too far on the Duke's generosity, and on one occasion, when staying at Brighton, he gladly accepted the use of another friend's carriage to go out to dinner, on the honourable plea that he was anxious to save the Duke's pocket. Wellington was far above all pettiness, all sordid ideas about money; he was free and liberal with it, and strictly honourable in

STRATHFIELDSAYE.

all pecuniary transactions, a most hospitable host, who kept an excellent table, and did things really well—so much so, that in Spain his expenditure exceeded his income, and he was compelled to demand better allowances, which were grudgingly granted. His brother, the Governor-General, purchased his lieutenant-colonelcy for him, and Arthur Wellesley's first desire on receiving some Indian prize-money was to repay the loan, a proposal which his brother, greatly to his honour, distinctly repudiated.

Full justice has never been done to Wellington's active benevolence. His hand was continually in his pockets; he never turned a deaf ear to any appeal, and was often shamelessly victimised. When rebuked on one occasion for being so easily taken in, he answered naïvely, "What could I do? One could not let the man starve." He kept a bag of sovereigns handy, as well as a sheaf of bank notes, in his desk, to be applied to any pressing necessitous case that arose. Mr. Gleig reports that the Duke's charities amounted in one year to £4000. There is a story on this head which should be inserted here. It is of one of the Waterloo banquets that took place annually at Apsley House. The Duke produced a valuable snuff-box at one period in the banquet; it went the round of the

table and—disappeared. The incident was so unpleasant that the guests present proposed that all should agree to be searched. All did agree but one old officer, who altogether refused, and was very coldly looked upon in consequence, being strongly suspected of the theft. Next year the Duke of Wellington wore for the first time the same uniform for the same banquet, and almost immediately found the snuff-box in some pocket. He had not forgotten the old officer's suspicious conduct, which in this new light became the more strange. So the Duke searched him out, and asked what it meant. "Your Grace, I refused to be searched because at that moment my pockets were filled with broken victuals I had filched from your table. While I feasted, my family were starving in a poor lodging, and I was taking them food." The story runs that the Duke was affected to tears, and at once took care that the impoverished officer should be put in a better position and above want.[1]

One other story was recounted to me in my youth by an old Peninsular veteran, who vouched for its accuracy. Once, in a ball-room at Bath, the Duke came across a half-pay officer whom he

[1] "Ramsay's Reminiscences." The same story is told of Marshal Wade, and will be found in Horace Walpole's letters.

THE DUKE'S BEDROOM, WALMER CASTLE.

knew well, and accosted with much kindliness. "Can I do anything for you?" asked Wellington. "Yes, your Grace, you can do me a very great service. Give me your arm across the room." The Duke assented laughingly, and at the other end of the room asked what it all meant. "I am paying my addresses to a wealthy widow who is here, and who will, I think, accept me now that she sees me so honoured by your Grace." The result was as he hoped, and with part of the fortune thus acquired he purchased back on to full pay, and resuming an active career, gained in due course the highest distinction.

As time passed, and during the later years of his life, Wellington occupied a unique position. He was on a high pinnacle, the first man in England, the best known man in the country; "not only the adviser of the Crown and the arbiter of parties," but to the public a universal referee and correspondent. People consulted him on every conceivable subject; all sorts of tricks were adopted to get one of his famous replies, couched in the well-known style, "Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington presents his compliments to," &c. &c. It is now said that the application made by Lord Douro's washerwoman to the Duke for an unpaid account was only a hoax in order to

extract an autograph letter. Almost to the day of his death the Duke was a real painstaking operative, a man of habit and hard work of the most varied kind. No one in England gave away more brides or had more god-children. He rose early from his simple couch at Walmer, an old campaigning friend in Apsley House, a truckle-bed, and went straight to his desk, where he dealt with his day's correspondence, taking every point in turn, and giving each that concentrated attention that was one of his greatest faculties. "Rest! Every other animal, even a donkey, a costermonger's donkey, is allowed some rest, but the Duke of Wellington never. There is no help for it. As long as I am able to go on, they will put the saddle on my back and make me go." In the short interval when the whole Ministry was combined in his single person, and he found arrears in some of the offices, he left none. The training of the Peninsula was still bearing good fruit.

CHAPTER XVIII

WELLINGTON AT HOME

Apsley House—Private apartments—Art treasures—Wellington and Sir David Wilkie—China and plate—His craze for and collection of watches—Active habits—Last illness and death.

SOMETHING of the skill of the modern interviewer is needed to bring Wellington as he was and lived—his tastes, habits, ways, predilections, even his eccentricities—before a later generation. He had three separate homes—Walmer, Strathfieldsaye, and Apsley House, giving his preference perhaps to the first, but residing at all in turn. Walmer has been in many hands since his, but the recollection of him is still religiously preserved there, and he is remembered as one of the most conscientious wardens the Cinque Ports have ever had.[1] Strathfieldsaye is also full of memories of the first Duke, but Apsley House is actually the same to-day as when he last left it to end his great life at Walmer.

[1] It says much for the Duke's far-seeing judgment that he was in favour of the harbour or port extension of Dover, on almost the very lines that it is now being carried out, some fifty years later. I am told that Lord Salisbury shows the same business head in conducting the affairs of the Cinque Ports.

The visitor who enters Apsley House in the proper spirit cannot but be affected by the sentiment of the place. We seem to see the great man pacing its marble halls, issuing from its portals to walk or ride through the streets, working laboriously in the modest library attached to his still more modest private apartments; the three rooms which were peculiarly his own, at the back of the house, upon the ground floor; the small bedroom with its seven doors, bare of furniture, and leading into the study, where he worked in the forenoon with his secretaries. The standing desk is still preserved there, a plain rosewood desk, and near it the famous "mule box," of campaigning days, a plain deal box, never painted, with a special but by no means safe key, in which he kept his confidential papers and the bank notes for his secret charities. These rooms are still beautifully plain and simple, and no pains have been spared to keep them as they were occupied by the first owner and head of the house.

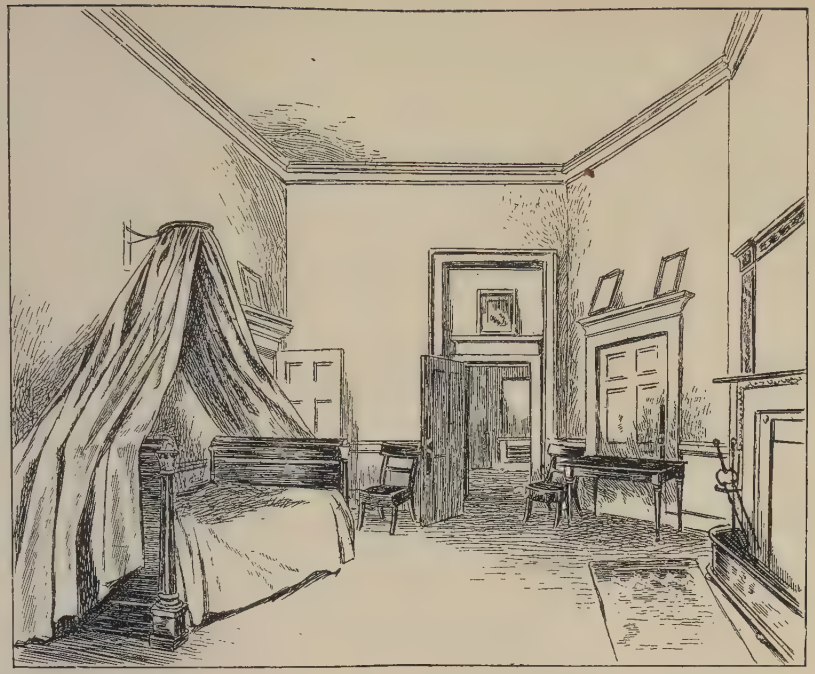
Apsley House is so named after Lord Chancellor Apsley, who built it at the latter end of the eighteenth century, on the site of the old lodge to Hyde Park, where once stood the suburban inn called "The Pillars of Hercules," where Squire Western stayed when he came seeking his fugitive

THE LIBRARY, APSLEY HOUSE.

daughter. In 1810 Apsley House came into the possession of Marquis Wellesley, who lived there while Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The Duke bought it from his brother in 1820, and spent a large sum of money (some £130,000) in alterations and improvements inside and out. The present bath-stone front was placed over the old brick, and a new wing, that adjoining the Park, was added. He was not pleased with the bill, which, he said, "would have broken any one's back but mine;" and he never seems to have had much affection for the house, the name of which—Apsley House—he seldom used, either in speaking of it or dating from it.

It is not exactly an art treasure house, yet there are many valuable pictures on its walls, many interesting curiosities and relics. In the chief hall are several busts and statues: notably of Castlereagh, by Chantrey; of the Duke himself, in bronze, by Count D'Orsay; a reduced copy of Rauch's statue of Blucher; Canova's great statue of Bonaparte, executed in 1810, but never unveiled, and purchased by our Government for £3000 from that of Louis XVIII., after Waterloo, for presentation to the Duke. The principal reception rooms are reached by a steep circular staircase, and in the first drawing-room is an indifferent portrait, attributed

to Wootton, of Marlborough, for whom Wellington had the highest respect. "I can conceive nothing greater than Marlborough at the head of an English army," he told Stanhope; and again: "Marlborough was remarkable for his clear, cool, steady understanding." Opposite Marlborough is Landseer's "Van Amberg in the lions' den," a picture painted under the personal supervision of the Duke, who stood over Landseer, Bible in hand, and pointed to the passage in Genesis where Adam is given dominion over the earth and its animals. Landseer was not unnaturally restive under the Duke's interference, who on looking at sketches, sometimes condemned them with, "Very fine, I dare say, but not what I want." The "Chelsea Pensioners" and the "Greenwich Veterans" are also here. The first was painted, slowly and painfully, by Sir David Wilkie, who went much to nature and painted many of the figures from life. This is the picture for which Wellington paid £1260, or 1200 guineas, which sum the Duke paid over on the nail, in cash. When Wilkie mildly suggested that he would prefer a cheque, the Duke replied laughingly, "Do you think I want Messrs. Coutts's clerks to know how foolishly I spend my money?" This picture was lent to Graves for three years to be engraved, on the clear understanding that it was to be returned



THE DUKE'S BEDROOM, APSLEY HOUSE.

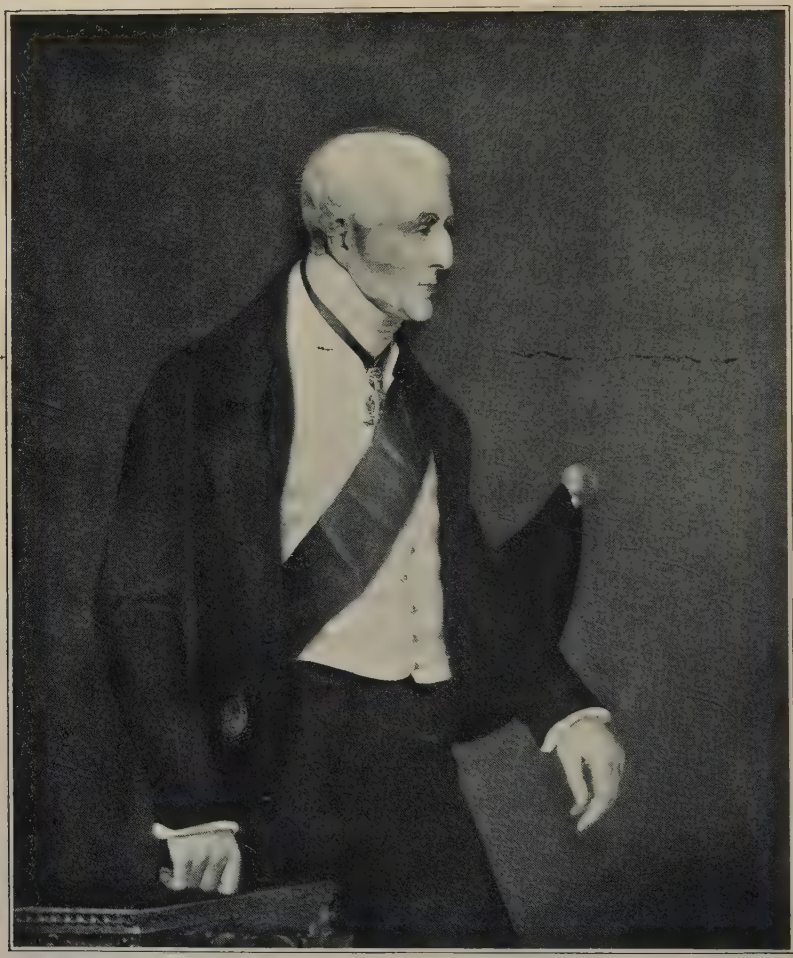
exactly at the date of the expiration of this term. It was sent back to time, the Duke receiving it, watch in hand, with the remark, "*Now*, Mr. Graves, you shall have any other picture of mine to engrave whenever you like." Sir David Wilkie is said to have received a second £1200 for the rights of engraving. The other picture of the Greenwich veterans was painted by Mr. Burnet, Wilkie having declined the commission. The Duke paid £500 for it, and made it an heirloom.

The principal pictures made heirlooms by the Duke are the Spanish pictures, as they are called in the inventory—those recovered from King Joseph after Vittoria, and restored to King Ferdinand of Spain by Wellington; although that monarch, with much good feeling, insisted that the Duke should keep them. Among these are several famous works by Velasquez: the "Aguador," or water-carrier; portraits of Quevedo and "The Young Man," long supposed to have been Velasquez himself; also the great portrait of the Pope, Innocent X., whose shrewd rubicund visage shines out from the canvas instinct with life and truth. There is a fine Correggio, and the Murillo of which Soult said to Gurwood when he saw it in Apsley House, "I value that picture, for it saved the life of two estimable men." The rapacious marshal had

threatened to shoot them both unless they gave up the picture.

Space forbids anything like a complete catalogue of the works of art in Apsley House. The pictures include many of the Dutch school, for which the Duke had a great liking—Jan Steens, Ostades, Teniers, and the rest; many portraits, those particularly of many of his comrades and lieutenants, the best of which are given in this work; a full-length by Lefebvre of Napoleon; Wilkie's portrait of the beautiful Lady Lyndhurst; an exceedingly fine likeness of Francis I. of Austria, so lifelike that the Duke on unpacking it exclaimed, "Poor man, very good—poor man, very like;" portraits also of "those two corporals," as Wellington styled the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia; last of all, a most monstrous and grotesque portrait of George IV., "in the garb of Old Gaul," a gigantic Highlander in a kilt.

Among the curiosities are the malachite vases presented to the Duke by the Czar, and a whole room full of china, crammed with the offerings of grateful kings and peoples. Here is the great gilt shield designed by Stothard, R.A., the gift of that very corporation of London that in 1809 clamoured for the recall of Wellington from Spain, valued at £100,000; innumerable dinner services in all kinds



Count Alfred D'Orsay. *Walker & Boutall, sc.*

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON, K.G.

of faience; and in cases through the room are ribbons and decorations of every order in the civilised world.

It has been said that Wellington was no great art lover, but he took a very lively interest in pictures, especially those he chose and purchased for himself. No doubt he was an unwilling sitter, and yet no man had more portraits painted of him He once said of himself that he had been taken in every attitude except that of standing on his head Another story is to the effect that he once gave rendezvous to several portrait painters at one and the same time. When they arrived, all together, they were aghast to find that he had caused a studio "throne" to be placed in the centre of a large room, which he ascended, saying, "Now, gentlemen, I can give you two hours. Seat yourselves around and fire away." Of all likenesses he preferred Count D'Orsay's, "who always made him look like a gentleman." To be an English gentleman was, in Wellington's mind, the highest title of honour. It was his religion almost, and he acted most scrupulously to the rules of conduct that guided the class in his days. There is no better proof of this than his readiness to give satisfaction to Gronow when the latter thought his character had been unfairly aspersed by the great Duke.

One man was fresh from the field of Waterloo, the cynosure of every eye; the other a simple captain in the Guards. But the Duke, having first apologised, wrote Gronow with his own hand to say he was ready to meet him if he was not "satisfied."

Wellington had one foible as a collector. His taste lay in watches; his fondness for them rivalled that of the Emperor Charles V., who amused himself in the cloister with watchmaking. The Duke loved to chat with M. Breguet, the watchmaker, who was always a welcome caller at Apsley House. He was very particular about time-keeping, yet his watches often disappointed him, probably because he insisted upon winding—or forgetting to wind—them up himself. The only clock he could really depend upon in Apsley House was that which still stands in the hall, and was as trustworthy as that at the Horse Guards. The Duke had six or seven watches always going in his room, and when he travelled had as many in the portmanteau which fitted into the front of his carriage.

Two of his watches possessed historical interest. One, his favourite, and constant companion, was of old-fashioned English make, and once belonged to Tippoo Sahib, having passed into the Duke's possession after the taking of Seringapatam. It was left once on the ground at a bivouac during

8. July 1837.

Sir/ I have received your communication relative to the erection of a Statue to the Duke of Wellington — As a Citizen of the World and as an Admirer a a Great Man belonging to History, I would willingly subscribe, but as a Frenchman, you will see the incongruity of my interfering in such a matter —

Your obedt

Cte d'Orsay

4 Upper Gore
Kensington

COUNT D'ORSAY TO THE DUKE OF RUTLAND

July 8, 1837

a retreat in the Peninsula, and Wellington valued it so highly that he went back three miles through the crowd, and was fortunate enough to recover it. The other watch was one made by Breguet for Napoleon, as a gift to his brother Joseph, which had a map of Spain enamelled on the back. Napoleon, after Joseph's misfortunes and expulsion from Spain, would not pay for it. It remained on Breguet's hands, and after the peace Sir Edward Paget bought it to present to the Duke. A third watch of Wellington's had belonged to Junot, and recorded lunar and weekly movements as well as the hours.

In late life the Duke always carried *montres de touche*, watches contrived by Breguet with knobs or bosses on the dial-plate, so that the time could be felt with the watch in the pocket, thus avoiding the rudeness of openly pulling it out. The Duke all his life thought highly of the value of time. He absolutely worshipped punctuality, and prided himself on never being late for a train. Once, however, he ran it very close, and got to the station after the proper time of departure of the express for Dover. The express had actually started, but, as many other passengers had also been left behind, a second special was being despatched just as the Duke arrived. "Ha!" cried the Duke, delighted. "Thought I was late. Never late in my life before.

My watch must be wrong; let it be taken to be regulated."

To the last the Duke retained his fondness for field sports and life in the open air. The general who rode to hounds as his chief relaxation in Spain, hunted regularly in England whenever and wherever he could. He is a prominent figure in Sir Francis Grant's picture of the Melton Hunt, and in Calvert's of the Vine. He was very fond of shooting, and a good shot. He walked a good deal, even when infirm and at a very advanced age. There is no better story, especially in the sequel, which, I believe, is hardly known, than that of his adventure at the crossing in front of Apsley House. The Duke narrowly escaped an accident, from which he was rescued by some stranger, who profited by the occasion to express his deep thankfulness at being of some assistance to "the great Englishman, the great hero, the——" "Don't be a d——d fool," snapped the Duke, who hated hyperbole, and walked off. The best part of the story is to come. The Duke later the same day was describing the affair in a lady's[1] drawing-room, and wound up the story with the astonishing statement, "I do believe if it hadn't been for me the fellow would have been run over."

[1] Lady Lyttleton.

There can be no doubt that the Duke owed immunity from serious illness, and his longevity, to these active habits. He benefited largely by his systematic, resolute employment of the simplest and best means of keeping up his condition. He was exceedingly temperate and abstemious, a very small eater—too small, his friends sometimes said, for health. When he paid the great debt at last, he had reached the long age of eighty-three. His end was peaceful; he passed away quietly and painlessly, mourned by the whole nation.

"Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence
Yet clearest of ambition's crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good grey head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true—
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er,
The great world-victor's victor will be seen no more."

—TENNYSON: *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.*

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PART II

THE COMRADES OF WELLINGTON

CHAPTER I

LEADING LIEUTENANTS

Hill — Beresford — Cotton — Graham — Picton — Craufurd — Lowry Cole — Colville — Leith — Clinton — Fletcher — Le Marchant — Gomm — Kempt — Dickson — Fitz Roy Somerset — Colin Campbell — William Gordon.

MANY fine soldiers surrounded Wellington, and served him loyally through his long and chequered campaigns, but, like lesser stars in a system, their effulgence was dimmed in the strong brilliant light of the central sun. The chief was unquestionably a head and shoulders above his lieutenants; none could approach him or compare with him; he was immeasurably their superior in every respect. Yet they were good men and true, each according to his means and capabilities. Each had his strong points; this was foremost in the fight, that strenuous and unyielding in defence, another was skilled in administration or an adept in manœuvre, of a sanguine spirit to sway and strengthen troops. There was Hill, "Farmer Hill," "Daddy Hill," as he was affectionately known through the army, beloved by all who knew him,

the most modest, retiring, mild-mannered of men, the very ideal of an English country gentleman, yet brave as a lion, sturdy, safe, unflinching in battle, a good and faithful soldier who made no mistakes and "always did what he was told,"[1] a model of discipline "who never exceeded his orders, but never failed to execute them in consummate and complete style"[2]; Beresford, the big boisterous Irishman, long-headed, large-minded, one on whom his chief greatly relied for counsel and support, who had great gifts for organisation and a firm temper in forming and perfecting the drill and discipline of newly raised levies; Cotton, the *beau sabreur*, the splendid horseman, young, intrepid, handsome, the Murat of English cavalry; Graham, the grand and gallant old soldier, who took late in life to the business of war out of pure love of it, and showed that he was a born leader of men, strongest in the hour of supreme danger, keen, daring, "of ready temper for battle"; Picton, ever an eager, forward combatant, a slogger and hard hitter, "a rough, foul-mouthed devil as ever lived," Wellington called him, yet believed in him thoroughly, declaring that "no man could do better in the different services assigned to him"; Craufurd, dark, stern, and unbending, perhaps the strictest disciplinarian the army has ever known.

[1] Wellington. [2] Napier.

an unrivalled leader of light troops, whose incomparable "Orders" still survive as a military classic; Lowry Cole, trustworthy and obedient, of courtly manners and fine presence; Colville, an excellent tactician; Leith and Clinton the same, and good safe divisional leaders; Murray, the practised staff-officer, of long experience as a quartermaster-general, "the best brains in the army after Wellington"[1]; Charles Stewart, afterwards Lord Londonderry; Wellington's brother-in-law, good-tempered Edward Pakenham, the most straightforward officer, most skilful and intelligent in action; Fletcher, the skilful engineer who built the lines of Torres Vedras, and who was killed all too soon at the first and unsuccessful assault at San Sebastian; his colleagues and subordinates, Burgoyne and Harry Jones, both of whom rose in after years to great place and fame; Le Marchant,[2] the first to give an impetus to military education in England, and who invented Sandhurst by starting the colleges of Great Marlow and High Wycombe; Kempt, at one time a clerk in Cox & Greenwood's, the army agents;[3] Gomm, most accomplished

[1] Larpent.

[2] Le Marchant will be remembered as having devised the regulations for cavalry sword exercise; he was a splendid *sabreur*, and at Salamanca, before his death, cut down six of the enemy with his own hand.

[3] His Royal Highness the Duke of York was, it is said, deep in the books

of staff-officers; Hardinge, the same who rose to be a peer of the realm and commander-in-chief of the army; Colborne, Lord Seaton, one of the best regimental colonels the army has ever seen, "a man of singular talent for war" (Napier), who on several occasions, by his ready tactical genius, changed the fate of a battle at the most critical time; Beckwith, another fine regimental officer and leader of light troops, and, with Colborne, trusted subordinates of their renowned chief, Craufurd; Dickson, already mentioned, a great artilleryman, of impetuous character, fighting doggedly against ill-health, a most methodical and industrious soldier, minute and painstaking, a master of detail; Pack, a fighting Irishman, renowned for his forwardness on many various fields; De Lancey, one of the most expert in the quartermaster-general's branch; the Napiers, three intrepid brothers who poured out their life's blood unhesitatingly upon numberless hard-fought fields; Waters, unrivalled as an intelligence officer, ubiquitous, keenly observant, who could assume any costume, play any part, speak fluent Castilian or the lowest patois, talk French if necessary with the German accent of the pure

of this well-known bank. There is a story of a dinner at which the Duke proposed their health, saying, "I am their banker; that is to say, I have more of their money than they of mine."

Alsatian; Colquhoun Grant, another of the same kidney, upon whose explorations and reconnaissances Wellington relied, and was assisted in some of his greatest *coups;* Cameron of the fighting 9th, better known as "Devil" Cameron, a man of astonishing enterprise in attack; Colin Campbell, afterwards Lord Clyde, who learnt his trade in the Peninsula, and was inured to danger by his sturdy captain, who marched him to and fro under the hottest fire the first time he went into action, and lived to command armies on his own account in very critical times.

Wellington's own personal staff, who shared his labours and dangers, could work as well as play; they must be men of like endurance with their indefatigable chief. Lord Fitz Roy Somerset stands first among them as the most devoted assistant and friend. "You are aware how useful he always has been to me . . . and what a regard and affection I feel for him," Wellington wrote of him after Waterloo. Lord Fitz Roy was not only untiring in his special secretarial work, but he was in intimate relations with regimental commanding officers, who could always come to him in matters appertaining to their battalions, and through him to Wellington, thus giving the general-in-chief more exact knowledge of the state of regiments,

the merits of individual officers, than could have been obtained by the regular official reports.[1] This was done, as Napier tells us, with such discretion and judgment that the military hierarchy was in no manner weakened. Another staff-officer who was at Wellington's side through all his campaigning was Sir Colin Campbell;[2] their acquaintance began in India, at the assault of Ahmednuggur, where Campbell was thrown off a high wall into space. Wellesley saw the affair, and feared Campbell was killed, but, on sending to inquire, found that he was only severely wounded. Campbell afterwards became Wellesley's brigade major; in the Peninsula he joined his personal staff, and was by his side to the last at Waterloo and in Paris.

William Gordon, again, who was a dear friend; Lord March, for whom he had a fatherly affection; Lord William Lennox; the faithful Gurwood, who first won his chief's esteem at the assault of Ciudad Rodrigo, where he received the Governor's sword—these were all good soldiers, active, full of spirits, all alive, ready to chaff and laugh, dance, hunt, play, but ready, too, to spend hours in the saddle by their chief's side, in covering long distances or in the thick of the fight.

[1] "Napier's History," iv. 80.

[2] Not the Colin Campbell who afterwards became Lord Clyde.

It is impossible, however, to do full justice to the merits of all Wellington's worthies; the names even of all the gallant and deserving band cannot be enumerated. But I propose now to deal more at length with some of the most prominent and distinguished.

CHAPTER II

COTTON

Of good birth—Rapid promotion—Friend of George III.—Early service in India—Brighton and the Prince Regent—Baronetcy.

COTTON comes first of those who bore the whole heat and burthen of the day, who fought from first to last from Portugal through Spain into France—first by right of seniority, for after the second landing in Portugal he presently became the highest on the list, although the youngest of the major-generals. Stapleton Cotton owed it to his family connections that he gained promotion more rapidly than most, even in those days when influence was so powerful a lever. The son of a baronet, with large landed estates and many political friends, he found himself lieutenant-colonel commanding a regiment of horse, "Gwynn's Hussars," the 25th Light Dragoons, at the early age of one-and-twenty. Yet he was already a soldier of promise who had done good service in the field. "Little Cotton" passed in a couple of years from ensign of infantry to a captain of carabineers—the

6th Dragoon Guards, a wild regiment, in those days much given to hard drinking and ready fighting; but the boy, whose exuberant spirits soon earned him the epithet of "Rapid Cotton," was the life of the mess without yielding to debauchery. He fought at Premont in Flanders, returning to command his troop in action, although actually on his homeward journey with his new rank of lieutenant-colonel. He became the friend of George III., who loved the light-hearted young man, at that time the beau-ideal of a cavalry officer, slight but strongly built, with a neat figure, active in wind and limb. Society welcomed the handsome youth with open arms, and he was in the thick of gaieties, which he never preferred to his own adventurous calling, and he hailed with delight the order to embark with his regiment for India in 1796. *En route* he was detained at the Cape for the operations that ended with the defeat of the Dutch. In India he was stationed in the Madras Presidency, and was brought into frequent contact with Colonel Wellesley, his great future leader. There was, however, no intimacy between them; Cotton found Wellesley "cheerful, good-natured, but reserved, never even at that age indulging in the confidential intercourse of youth." Cotton was at the taking of Seringapatam, and the day previous, at

six-and-twenty, commanded a small cavalry brigade, which he handled so well that he was mentioned in despatches, and proved himself thus early a cool and skilful cavalry leader.

The death of his elder brother made him next heir to the title, and cut short his Indian career. He was exchanged by his father into the 16th Dragoons, and returned to the frivolous life of the Court. At Brighton he became intimate with the Prince of Wales, but fell into disgrace over some incautious gossip about Mrs. Fitz-Herbert, an offence the Prince never pardoned, and the full penalty of which Cotton felt years later in losing the command of the cavalry at Waterloo. Marriage, service in Ireland, parliamentary duties (for Cotton, after the manner of many prominent soldiers of his time, had a seat in the House of Commons) filled up his time till war loomed near at home. He was now a major-general (1805), and he had lost his young wife in 1807, and in 1808 he gladly accepted the command of a small brigade to serve in Portugal. He was too late to join Sir John Moore, but he was with Wellesley in the advance of the Douro, and again at Talavera, where with his brigade, and his firm front at the critical moment, he helped with the 48th foot to save the battle.

At the end of the year 1809 Cotton succeeded

to the baronetcy, and went home to settle his affairs. Other than family honours awaited him, for on taking his place he received the thanks of the House of Commons. He might now have fairly rested upon his laurels, and remained in England to enjoy life, a spoiled darling of fortune, possessed of a fine estate, made much of in society, indulging to the full in gaiety and sport. But Cotton was before all a soldier, devoted to the trade in which he was so great a proficient, and he was eager to return at once to Spain. Wellington received him cordially, and gave him the command of the whole of his cavalry. It has been said by Cotton's friends that Wellington never liked him, and there are stories extant that go to prove, if trustworthy, that he laughed a little at the dandified cavalry general in after years.[1] Yet it is certain that in the Peninsula Wellington thought highly of him; he was heard to say that he knew, when he gave Sir Stapleton Cotton an order, it would be obeyed with zeal and discretion. As a leader Wellington was very thrifty of his horsemen, and used them as little as he could help. There were times, too, when he rebuked his cavalry officers sharply. In 1812 he writes to Hill condemning "the trick our officers

[1] See post, p. 280.

of cavalry have acquired of galloping at everything, and then galloping back as fast as they gallop on the enemy. They never consider their situation, never think of manœuvring before an enemy—so little, that one would think they cannot manœuvre except on Wimbledon Common; and when they use their arm as it ought to be used, viz. offensively, they never keep nor provide for a reserve."

It does not appear that Wellington included Sir Stapleton in these severe strictures. Nor was he chary of praise to his cavalry leader. At Salamanca he spoke out with ungrudging enthusiasm. After Le Marchant's charge, when the heavy dragoons, "big men on big horses," crashed into the French columns and almost destroyed them, Wellington rode up to him, and cried with his usual objurgation, "By G—d, Cotton, I never saw anything more splendid in my life! The day is *yours*."[1] Afterwards he strongly urged that some special mark of favour should be conferred upon

[1] General Le Marchant, who lost his life in this charge, had had "words" with his chief just before he started on his perilous adventure. Le Marchant, a little confused by the many changes of position that had taken place that morning, asked his chief which way he should front. "To the enemy, sir!" cried Cotton furiously. Le Marchant retorted as angrily, for the answer conveyed an imputation on his courage, of course neither meant nor deserved. The matter would probably have ended in a duel but for poor Le Marchant's death.

him, and Cotton got the red-ribbon of the Bath. "No cavalry could act better than ours," he wrote Lord Bathurst; "and I must say for Sir Stapleton, that I don't know where we could find an officer that could command our cavalry in this country as well as he does."

Sir Stapleton Cotton was no doubt entitled to high commendation. By natural gifts, inclinations, habits, and acquired proficiency he was admirably fitted for the post he held. He knew his business to the letter; no adjutant in the smartest regiment could beat him in details of the cavalry service. At an inspection his eye was quick and unerring; in manœuvres he was an adept, no ill-informed officer dared go wrong in drill when he was by; his leadership was excellent; a good eye for the country, much promptitude and decision, with a full knowledge of pace; always cool and collected, under the heaviest fire as calm as in a room, above all, full of the cheery hopefulness that looked always at the bright side, refusing to be cast down or depressed, he won the readiest support of those he commanded. In person he was the perfection of a cavalry officer. A fine figure and a fine seat, a noble presence on horseback, and a full belief in the decorative part of his business, helped him greatly, and enhanced his reputation as a *beau*

sabreur. Like Wellington he paid the strictest attention to dress, but, more like Murat, he loved gay uniforms and gorgeous trappings, and he appeared always in the hardest encounters and most trying occasions as though going to a levee or a ball. His splendid appearance in Spain gained him the title of the "Lion d'Or." When fully dressed and accoutred, generally in the uniform of a general of Hussars, it was computed that Cotton as he rode, man and horse, was worth about £500. Withal he was kindly, sociable, warm-hearted, courteous to all ranks, hospitable, and loving to entertain his friends. Although hot-tempered, sharp speaking, he was greatly liked, for he personified some of the qualities men mostly admire—youth, good looks, and daring courage.

At the close of the day at Salamanca, Cotton was severely wounded in the arm, and but for his own strenuous objection must have suffered amputation. But he rejoined Wellington in time to cover the retreat from Burgos. At the crossing of the Pisuerga he fought an action of the three arms with great skill and judgment, for which he was commended by Wellington. It is in this period that we must place the story, told by Sir Harry Jones,[1] of his sitting by the bivouac fire when a group of

[1] To Colonel W. W. Knollys, Lord Combermere's biographer.

M. Pearson, pinx. *Walker & Boutall, sc.*

VISCOUNT COMBERMERE, G.C.B.

staff-officers galloped up, and one of them, apparently a young aide-de-camp, gave some orders in an authoritative voice. "Who is that chap who speaks so impetuously?" asked Jones. "Don't you know?" replied Sir Richard Fletcher, his chief. "It is Sir Stapleton Cotton, who commands the cavalry."

Cotton returned a second time to England, and was again thanked by the House of Commons. He looked now for a peerage, and his friends were justified in urging his claims. But there were reasons[1] other than the continued disfavour in which he stood with the Prince Regent, and he went back to the Peninsula still Sir Stapleton Cotton, just too late for Vittoria, but in time to take part in the closing scenes of the war. Now, however, six of Wellington's most distinguished generals were advanced to the peerage, Cotton among them, with the title of Lord Combermere. Then followed the bitter disappointment of his omission from the staff for the Waterloo campaign. While he fully expected, and might fairly claim, the command of the cavalry, it was denied, as is said, by the unrelenting spitefulness of the Prince Regent. A letter from the military secretary to the Duke sought to ignore the real reason of the

[1] See post, under Beresford.

refusal. "There appears to be a very general wish on his own part and that of others," writes Torrens, "that Lord Uxbridge should be appointed to your cavalry. Will you have the goodness to let me know your confidential wishes and opinion on the subject?" The Duke wished for Lord Combermere, and strongly urged his appointment, assuring him that he was most anxious "to have the assistance of all those to whom upon former occasions I have been so much indebted." But the great leader's wishes were as nothing against court intrigue, and Combermere was passed over. It was another of the many rebuffs and crossings Wellington had to endure when preparing for the great final struggle with Napoleon, and to which I have referred elsewhere.[1] Lord Uxbridge, it must be admitted, nobly discharged the duty entrusted to him,[2] and after his wound on the field, the cavalry command during the occupation of France was given to Combermere.

[1] See ante, p. 163.

[2] Lord Uxbridge, as Lord Paget, commanded the cavalry in the retreat on Corunna, and was highly commended by Sir John Moore. His force was in sore straits too—many of the horses without shoes, the men greatly worn and harassed. But Moore said his cavalry behaved admirably, and always showed superior to the French, thanks to the fine example showed them by their leaders, Lord Paget and Stewart. Uxbridge had risen at one bound through the regimental grades; he was lieutenant in the 7th Fusiliers in March 1795, and a lieutenant-colonel of the 16th Dragoons in June the same year. In 1796 he became colonel of the 7th Light Dragoons, and, despite his brief military experience, is said to have made it one of the smartest

The remainder of a useful and distinguished life, prolonged far beyond the usual limits, was spent by Stapleton Cotton in the service of his country. He governed Barbadoes; he commanded the troops in Ireland; he was especially selected by his old chief for that difficult enterprise the reduction of Bhurtpore, and he was afterwards commander-in-chief in India, and acted for a time as Governor-General. He was never credited with conspicuous genius, and it was said that Wellington valued him more for his bull-dog determination to carry any business through than his capacity and mental gifts. Hence the famous story of his reply to the East India Company's directors when they waited upon him to ask for a general to take Bhurtpore. "You can't do better than have Combermere," the Duke had said. "But," protested the directors, "we believed your Grace did not think very highly of Lord Combermere, or consider him a man of great genius." "I don't care a d—n about his genius," was the reply, in the Duke's downright language; "I tell you he is the man to take Bhurtpore." And he took it with splendid gallantry,

cavalry regiments in the army. Except at Walcheren he saw no service between Corunna and Waterloo. But in the final campaign Wellington greatly relied upon him, gave him a free hand, and we have it from Lord Uxbridge himself that "from first to last he never bothered the Duke with a single question as to necessary movements."

having been with difficulty dissuaded from leading the stormers; but he went in person through the thick of the fire to summon the citadel to surrender. It was as brilliant an achievement as any in our Indian annals, and had a potent influence upon the consolidation of our rule; for smaller folk had constantly pointed to the supposed impregnable fortress and cried tauntingly, "You may bully us, but go and take Bhurtpore."

There was little question of the fine soldierly qualities of the old *sabreur*, although in later years his services were rather overlooked, and the stern stuff of which he was made forgotten under the guise he assumed of a superannuated dandy and gay man about town. It was always said that Thackeray's Sir George Tufto, that inimitable type of a dashing dragoon general, was drawn from Lord Combermere. Nor is the story quite apocryphal of the Duke of Wellington's apostrophe when his former lieutenant paid him a visit at the Horse Guards. Lord Fitz Roy Somerset is said to have announced him; whereupon the Duke cried testily, "What does the d——d old painted jackass want with me?" His military secretary, aghast, whispered, "He will hear you, sir." Then the old Duke used the words so often quoted, "Do you think I care a twopenny tinker's d—n whether he hears me or not!" And

not strangely, when Lord Fitz Roy went out into the ante-room, Lord Combermere had disappeared.

Stapleton Cotton outlived all his contemporaries, and died full of honours, a field-marshal, gold stick colonel of the 1st Life Guards, and constable of the Tower, at the advanced age of ninety-two.

CHAPTER III

HILL

Parentage—One of a large family—Early studies—First commission—Promotion—Service abroad—Becomes major-general—To Copenhagen with Wellesley; and to Portugal—Engaged in independent operations—Almaraz—His fine soldierly qualities—His kindliness and the affection he won—"Father Hill"—At Waterloo—Later services as commander of the forces—Wellington's appreciation.

ROWLAND HILL came of a good old Shropshire stock, the Hills of Hawkstone; he belonged to the younger branch, but the baronetcy is now merged in the higher honours won by the distinguished general. There were sixteen of them, ten sons and six daughters, all children of the fine old man whom George IV. greeted in after years as the father of so many brave sons. Four of them served under Wellington—Rowland, Lord Hill; Sir Robert, an officer in the Blues; Thomas Noel, who commanded a Portuguese regiment; and Clement, his brother's aide-de-camp. Rowland is remembered as a gentle, sensitive child, always good-tempered, but of delicate health, unable to join in the athletic sports of his more robust companions,

devoted to gardening and pet animals. It is told of him that he fainted at the sight of a cut finger; yet he lived to show coolness and self-possession amidst the carnage of a stricken field. When in his teens, and a commissioned officer, he could not bear to look at a prize fight under his windows. As his biographer says, "No common observer would have imagined for an instant that the army would have been his choice." Yet he made it himself, and his first commission dates from 1790, when he was in his nineteenth year, so that he entered later than was usual in those days, and he spent some time at the military school of Strasburg[1] before he joined for duty with the 53rd on 18th January 1791. His superiors at once recognised his merits, and he is described by his major (Mathews) as an officer whose "talents, disposition, and assiduity are of the most promising nature." The same observer strikes at once the keynote of the young man's character by adding that "his amiable manners, sweetness of temper, and uncommon propriety of conduct have not only endeared him to the regiment, but produced him the most flattering attentions from an extensive circle of the first fashion in this country."

Hill became a captain in 1793 by raising an independent company, and while still unattached

[1] Beresford also studied there.

he served as aide-de-camp in succession to Lord Mulgrave, Sir David Dundas, and General O'Hara. The latter, with far-seeing judgment, predicted that "the young man would rise to be one of the first soldiers of the age." While serving with Lord Mulgrave at the defence of Toulon, he made the acquaintance of a Mr. Graham, a volunteer aide-de-camp, the future Sir Thomas Graham, Lord Lynedoch, who had just then turned to military adventure as an anodyne in a terrible bereavement. Graham in the following year definitely decided to make the army his profession, and raised a regiment, the famous 90th, in which he offered Hill a majority if he would bring the necessary quota of recruits. When a second battalion was added, Hill became its lieutenant-colonel, holding the command from the year 1795 to 1803, when he was appointed a brigadier-general on the staff in Ireland. In those eight years he served with his regiment abroad and at home, in Ireland, at Isle Dieu, at Gibraltar, and with Sir Ralph Abercromby in Egypt. He was wounded in the battle of Aboukir, and until he recovered was on board the *Foudroyant*, Lord Keith's flagship, occupying the same cabin with his general, Sir Ralph, when the latter was brought there to die of his wounds. Hill next led his regiment to Cairo, as part of General Cradock's force; and we

may gather how good a regiment it was, how excellent a chief it had, from the encomiums of the inspecting general, Hope, a future companion in arms on a larger stage. "Considering the service your regiment has gone through," Hope remarked to its lieutenant-colonel, "it is impossible that it can be more complete than at present. I have minutely inspected every part of it, and it is with pleasure I tell you that the whole corps does you and the officers the greatest credit." Graham also wrote from London to congratulate him on the good conduct of the regiment.

Hill's promotion and removal from the 90th filled the regiment with the deepest regret; he was endeared to all ranks by the firm yet mild discipline he had enforced, and "his general attention to their interests." In his new sphere of duty, as a general charged with the defence of an Irish district now threatened with invasion, he was as active yet as tactful and considerate as ever. Now, however, he was appointed to General Lord Cathcart's Copenhagen expedition, and thus was thrown for the first time with Sir Arthur Wellesley, and established those friendly relations that subsisted between them till death. One of Sir Arthur's earliest letters on his receiving the command in Portugal was to "my dear Hill," and it went on to say: "I rejoice

extremely at the prospect I have before me of serving again with you. I hope we shall have more to do than we had on the last occasion on which we were together." He writes, again, that he is full of work, "but I shall not fail to attend to whatever you may write to me." An ever-anxious desire to show his confidence in Hill, and to treat him with kindliness and consideration, is to be seen everywhere in Wellington's correspondence.

Hill was the first to arrive off Portugal in 1808, and it was he who, "in the absence of Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley," reported to Lord Castlereagh that "none of the transports are missing, and the troops perfectly healthy." Hill commanded a brigade at Roleia and Vimiero; after the Convention of Cintra he joined Sir John Moore, and was engaged in the retreat on Corunna. Hill was with Hope in the centre during the battle; he covered the embarkation, and his brigade was the last on board ship. A very short time elapsed, barely enough to visit Shropshire, before he was again in Portugal. In March 1809 he was with Cradock, and was sent forward with a force towards Pombal to watch the French, who were threatening the north of Portugal, but with strict injunctions to avoid a collision. Sir John Cradock was a timid general, and there would have been no crossing of

the Douro, no Talavera, no Peninsular triumphs, if he had continued in command. But a better man was close at hand, and Wellesley, in his prompt advance against Soult, was glad to give Hill a foremost place. Hill was the first to come in touch with the French; he crossed the Douro with the earliest boatloads of men, and the stout defence of the Seminary, which paved the way to success, was made under his personal control. At Talavera again Hill held the hill on the left, that was long the chief point of danger, and was wounded in the head.

After this Hill was advanced by Wellington to the position he long held, that practically of second in command. Wellington, in laying his plans for the defence of Portugal, divided his whole force into two separate corps, one of which he kept under his own command, the other he offered to Hill. "I will not make any arrangements," he wrote, "either as to the troops that are to comprise it or as to the officer who is to command it, without offering the command to you. At the same time, I will not separate you from the army and from my own immediate command without consulting your wishes." Hill frankly and readily accepted the proposal made him (as he put it) "in the handsomest manner." "I am aware," he goes on, "of the importance of the situation I am placed in, and trust

I shall be attended with the same good fortune I have hitherto experienced." Henceforth he was continually employed in more or less independent operations. After the withdrawal into Portugal, he held the right flank, at first at Abrantes, on the Tagus, and then more in advance across the river about Portalegre, where he watched Elvas and Badajoz. When Massena invaded Portugal, Hill faced Regnier until it was certain that no move would be made along the valley of the Tagus; then, anticipating his orders, he crossed the river, and by forced marches joined Wellington. During the long defence of Torres Vedras, Hill was again the guardian of the right flank, and held the Tagus, when by his ceaseless vigilance he prevented Massena from bridging the river.

Again, in 1811, on his return from sick leave to England, he won on his own account the action of Arroyo de los Molinos, where he surprised Gérard after a night march, and almost destroyed him—"a triumph for our general (Hill), a triumph all his own. He gained great credit for this well-conducted enterprise, and he gained what to one of his mild, kind, humane character was still more valuable, a bloodless victory."[1] The surprise of Almaraz was another operation entirely his own.

[1] Moyle Sherer, "Recollections."

He had been detached as usual to make head against Soult, while Wellington was engaged in the reduction of the fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz. After their capture, when Wellington was resolved to advance against Marmont on the Tormes, it became essential that the one remaining passage by which Soult, coming from the south, could cross the Tagus and join Marmont, should be closed. This was by the bridge of boats at Almaraz, which was defended by strong works. Hill, after clever feints to deceive Soult, fell upon Almaraz by forced marches from Badajoz, and seized it. The value of this achievement was fully seen when the bridge of Alcantara, lower down the Tagus, was repaired, and the corps of Hill became by fourteen days' march nearer Wellington than Soult, in Andalucia, was to Marmont. While Wellington carried on the operations that included the battle of Salamanca and were followed by the entry into Madrid, Hill maintained his useful rôle of holding the south, and was across the Guadiana at Zafra. After the victory he was, if Soult showed no signs of retreating, to come to terms with him; but the general movement of the French was one of concentration to the eastward, where King Joseph, Soult, and Suchet were presently combined. Wellington now called

Hill to him, and gave him charge of Madrid, while he moved northward to undertake the siege of Burgos, as already described.[1] In the famous retreat Hill evacuated Madrid promptly, having first destroyed the bridge of Aranjuez, and crossing the Guadarrama mountains by the royal road, reached Arevalo, where he was again in touch with Wellington, and co-operated with him in the final withdrawal behind Ciudad Rodrigo. Then Hill once more assumed his post upon the right flank, and spent the winter about Coria, where he watched the Pass of Perales, and was within easy reach of the Tagus.

In all these important movements Hill displayed admirable qualities. Too high praise cannot be accorded to his promptitude, his daring, the sure and skilful handling of his troops. He was especially remarkable, too, for his loyal support of his great chief; he seemed to know Wellington's plans almost by intuition, at least he most readily understood them, and how he could best further and support them by subordinating his own personal and subsidiary operations. As I have said on a previous page, Wellington entirely trusted Hill, and it is to be seen in all his correspondence; the chief took the lieutenant often into his confidence,

[1] See ante, p. 99.

not exactly seeking his advice, but keeping him informed of his most secret plans. Wellington was ever ready to acknowledge the assistance he got from Hill. "Nothing could be more satisfactory to me than all you did," he writes in 1811; and after the affair at Arroyo de los Molinos strongly recommended him to the Prince Regent for some "mark of favour," which was followed in due course with the knighthood of the Bath; and the affair was mentioned, when Parliament met, in the speech from the throne. He was Sir Rowland Hill at the time of the surprise of Almaraz.

In the final advance from Portugal, Hill was for a time still alone; but he came under Wellington's command when the army was united before the river Ebro, and in the turning movements that ended with Vittoria. In that famous action Hill worked out his own attack, but under Wellington's eye; it was generally the same in the Pyrenees, although the army had been now formed into three principal corps, commanded respectively by Hill, Beresford, and Graham (who was presently succeeded by Hope). Hill's chief exploit was the victory of St. Pierre, a battle which he fought single-handed against Soult, and won in spite of the defection of two of his own colonels at the critical moment. He played the soldier as well as the general, rallying the broken

regiments, and using his reserves with decision. "He knew indeed that the 6th Division (sent by Wellington to his aid) was close at hand, and the battle might be fought over again; but, like a thorough soldier, he was resolved to win his own fight with his own troops if he could; and he did so, after a manner that in less eventful times would have rendered him the hero of a nation."

Hill richly merited the affections and devoted support of his troops. "The great foundation of his popularity," wrote one who knew him well, "was his sterling personal worth and his heroic spirit; but his popularity was increased and strengthened as soon as he was seen. He was the very picture of an English country gentleman. To those soldiers who came from the rural districts of England he represented home; his fresh complexion, placid face, kind eyes, kind voice, and the total absence of all parade or noise in his habits, delighted them . . . his kind attention to all the wants and comforts of his men, his visits to the sick in hospital, his vigilant protection of the poor country people, his just severity to marauders, his generous and humane treatment of such prisoners and wounded as fell into his hands, made him a place in the hearts of his soldiery." He was always thinking of his men, and no better trait is preserved than

his shortening the day's drill when his corps was being paraded, saying, "It is too hot; we must not fatigue the men." The story goes that a whisper ran through the ranks, "Bless him! There he is! Father Hill again."

Hill was created a peer when he returned from Spain, and might have gone at once into another campaign. He was offered the command of the expedition about to be despatched to America, but refused it. When Napoleon broke loose from Elba, Hill was one of the first officers in the field. He was summoned to the Cabinet, and asked if he could start without delay that very night for Belgium.

News had arrived that Louis XVIII., having fled from France, was at Ostend, and that some premature collision might take place upon the frontier. It was Hill's mission to "keep all right" until the arrival of Wellington from Vienna; to take no position that was too advanced, to avoid any serious engagement. The part Hill played in the short and decisive campaign need not be detailed at any length. In the great battle his corps was posted on the right and right centre. His horse was killed under him, pierced in five places, and rolled over him, bruising him severely. He remained in France during the occupation by the

allied troops, and commanded the whole of the British infantry, 25,000 men.

Lord Hill retired for a time into private life, but in his seclusion he was repeatedly asked to return to active work. He was offered the post of Master-General of the Ordnance, then that of commander-in-chief in India, but he declined both offices. He did not care for purely sedentary employment, and his health was too delicate for India. At length the Duke of Wellington became Prime Minister, and was forced to surrender the chief command of the army. The post was at once offered to Hill in the most flattering terms, and accepted with gratitude and diffidence. One of his first and most pleasing tasks was to give a command to his old friend and comrade, Lord Lynedoch, the colonel who had made him a major; he retained Lord Fitz Roy Somerset as his military secretary, and his disposal of patronage was at all times fair and impartial. The close attention he gave to his work gradually impaired his health, and in 1842 he felt constrained to resign his office, and he died the same year. The Duke of Wellington's letter of condolence is worth inserting here, as it bears upon the unjust charges made against him for want of due appreciation of those who served under him.

"You may conceive," writes the Duke to the new Lord Hill,[1] "better than I can express how much I have felt his loss. More than thirty-five years have elapsed since I had the satisfaction of being first connected with and assisted by him in the public service; and I must say that from that moment up to the latest period of his valuable and honourable life, nothing ever occurred to interrupt for one moment the friendly and intimate relations which subsisted between us."

[1] A nephew. Rowland Hill never married, and the peerage was specially continued to his brother's children.

CHAPTER IV

BERESFORD

Birth—First commission and early service—Egypt, Buenos Ayres, Madeira, Portugal—Given command of Portuguese army—Its reorganisation and improvement—Aided by excellent officers—Beresford and Albuera—Wellington's opinion of Beresford—His confidence in him—Later services—Enters political life.

BERESFORD, a natural son of the first Marquis of Waterford, was born in 1768; educated at home, and at the military school of Strasburg. When seventeen he was appointed ensign in the 6th Regiment, and served with it almost immediately in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He got his company unattached in 1791, after six years, and was appointed to the 69th. He was at the defence of Toulon, and at the taking of Corsica. Returning to England in 1794, he was given the command of a regiment raised upon his father's estates, which was soon broken up, and he became lieutenant-colonel of the famous 88th, or Connaught Rangers. "Christian's storm" dispersed the transports on which the 88th were embarked for the West Indies, and when it was

got together again, Beresford did garrison duty with it in Jersey until ordered to India in 1799. He missed Seringapatam, but joined Baird's expedition to the Red Sea, and on the desert march from Cosseir to the Nile commanded a brigade. On his return to England in 1803, he became a "full" colonel, and served at home until chosen to command one brigade of the expedition sent under Baird to recapture the Cape of Good Hope. Thence Beresford accompanied Admiral Popham to South America, where they seized Buenos Ayres, only to lose it again by surrender. Beresford defended the place for three days, then capitulated. This misfortune was followed by the disgraceful disaster at Monte Video, for which, however, Beresford was in nowise blamed. But he was held six months as a prisoner of war.

In 1807 Beresford returned to England, and was sent to seize Madeira in the name of the king of Portugal. He held the command of that island for six months, utilising his time so well that he acquired the Portuguese language, a cause largely contributing to his future success. A peace command was not much in his line, and he gladly left Madeira to take a brigade under Wellesley in Portugal, where, after the battle of Vimiero, he was commandant of Lisbon. In April 1808, after

twenty-three years' service, he became a major-general — no bad record — and was appointed to command a division under Sir John Moore. He took part in the memorable retreat on Corunna, and acted with the reserve in rendering valuable service in the constant contests with the pursuers. He fought at Corunna, and was one of the last to embark after the action.

Now came Beresford's opportunity; he reaped the reward of his diligence at Madeira. When a British commander was wanted for the disorganised Portuguese forces, the choice fell upon Beresford, largely on account of his knowledge of the language, and of his now large local experience in the country. No better selection could have been made. He exercised his powers wisely, tactfully, but with a strong, firm hand. When he assumed command, the Portuguese army was at the lowest point of "degradation, meanness, and bigotry." Neither honour, honesty, nor bravery was to be found among any serving in its ranks. Some of the officers were absent in civil situations, others were servants in great families; every regiment had its patron saint, who was borne on the strength as a captain or major, and his pay was drawn by the monks of some convent raised in his honour.

Beresford in his first proclamation to the Portuguese gave them the credit of possessing the military spirit, but latent and undeveloped, and appealed to their patriotism to submit to discipline in order to meet their enemy on equal terms. Then fixing his headquarters at Thomar, he collected the regiments together, and recast them on British models, using "stern but wholesome rigour," enforcing obedience and orderly conduct, and infusing the true soldierly spirit. The lines of reorganisation had, however, been sketched out by Wellington himself. A first elementary principle was that the army should have English officers at its head. The staff, the commissariat in particular, must be British; their proportion to the rest of the army must be large, in view of the number of detached posts that would have to be occupied, and the difficulty of providing and distributing supplies. The Portuguese officers who were retained, mostly in the junior ranks, were to be placed on a better footing. Their pay was to be increased; "without that it is vain to hope for much exertion from them." Wellington pointed out that for many years they had done little or no duty; they had occupied always the same garrison town, and had lived with their own families at home. If old abuses were to be removed, they

must have enough pay, and be enabled to maintain themselves decently. Wellington, in advising Beresford how to proceed, indicated exactly what was most needed in the Portuguese army. It was not discipline properly so called; "what they want are the habits and spirit of soldiers, the habits of command on the one side and of obedience on the other, mutual confidence between officers and men, and, above all, a determination in the superiors to obey the spirit of the orders they receive, let what will be the consequence, and the spirit to tell the true cause if they do not."

An independent witness—not a military officer, it is true—speaks in high terms of the Portuguese troops as they appeared to him in 1812. "They are in the highest order; the men really look at least equal to ours, better than some; the officers are well dressed and gay, and have the advantage of language, the infantry and the Caçadores in particular." Their marching is very "fresh"; "they come in even to the last mile singing along the road. The cavalry are not nearly so good, and are not, I suppose, so much to be trusted . . . they are called the *Vamuses*, from what passed last year when they ran off with a general cry of 'Vamus.' The infantry are termed Valerosas, from their having hugged and cheered each other early in the

war, when they had for the first time behaved well,[1] and beat off the French, each patting the other on the head, and saying, '*Mucha Valerosa!*' I hope the latter will support their name, and, indeed, they are disposed to do so, for we have put so much beef into both men and officers, that they are quite different animals, and will not submit at all to what they used to do, even from the English."[2]

Yet at an earlier date, when the newly raised levies were first incorporated with the British brigades, they were not thought of highly. Costello, the rifleman who served through the Peninsula with the 95th, describes the 1st and 2nd Caçadores in very uncomplimentary terms when they first joined the Light Division. "These fellows I never had any opinion of from the very first moment I saw them. They were the dirtiest and noisiest brutes I ever came across. Historians of the day have given them great credit, but during the whole of the Peninsular war, or at least the time they were with us, I never knew them to perform one gallant act. On the line of march they often reminded me of a band of strollers. They were very fond of gambling, and every halt we made was sure to find them squatted, and with cards in their hands." Costello was perhaps a little prejudiced, as the rank

[1] At Busaco. See ante, p. 81.

[2] Larpent, 140.

and file sometimes are, especially against foreigners. But superior officers had also their doubts of the Portuguese, for we find Wellington writing to Craufurd in 1810, "I hope you will find the Caçadores better than you expected;" and the commander of the Light Division was not, as a fact, disappointed in them.

The creation and development of the Portuguese army, whether or not it became a perfect fighting machine, yet gave many British officers commands and opportunities they might not have otherwise enjoyed. Many good men won their spurs under Beresford. He was always ready to accept volunteers of the right sort; thus George Napier would have gone to him for the chance of a regimental command, had not Craufurd refused to part with him. Dickson, as we have seen, first showed his talents with the Portuguese artillery. D'Urban and Hardinge rose high, thanks mainly to their early employment on Beresford's staff. The first D'Urban was quartermaster-general of the Portuguese army; a trained and experienced officer, who had served with Abercromby, and had been superintendent of the junior military college at High Marlow. When Sir Robert Wilson organised the Lusitanian Legion, D'Urban joined him; then his knowledge of Portuguese, and general

staff experience, recommended him to Beresford when the new army was being formed. He served as quartermaster-general through the whole of the war, never once leaving the Peninsula, and being engaged in almost every affair. He remained in Portugal after the British army left, and so missed Waterloo; but in after life he held many important posts, especially as Governor of Barbadoes, and afterwards of the Cape of Good Hope, where he annexed Natal after ejecting the rebellious boors, and gave his name to the chief town of the colony.

Henry Hardinge had a still more distinguished career in after life, but it may be doubted whether he would have gone so far to the front but for the Portuguese army. He also had learnt staff duties at High Wycombe under General Jarry, and he was deputy assistant quartermaster-general to Sir Brent Spencer's force, and was with it in the campaign of Vimiero, where he was wounded. But he joined Moore for the retreat, and his activity at the embarkation of the troops at Corunna first gained him the goodwill of Beresford, who secured him at once for the Portuguese army, in which he held the post of deputy under D'Urban. Hardinge was present in every engagement, and ever won golden opinions. His conduct at Albuera will be referred

to directly,[1] and Wellington thought so well of him that he wrote Beresford once: "Send me Hardinge or some staff-officer who has intelligence, to whom I can talk about the concerns of the Portuguese army." Hardinge, in the campaign of Waterloo, was British Commissioner at the Prussian head-quarters, and lost his arm at Ligny, a misfortune that gained him the kindly sobriquet of "the one-handed miscreant" from Daniel O'Connell in after years. Sir Henry Hardinge in 1820 entered political life as member for Durham; he twice held office as Irish Secretary, and gained reputation as a "plain, straightforward, just, and excellent man of business." Wellington thought highly of him to the last,[2] and at his urgent recommendation Hardinge was made Governor-General of India, where he is remembered as one of the best Viceroys that reigned. At the Duke's death Lord Hardinge became commander-in-chief of the army.

To return to Beresford. The Marshal, although specially in command of the Portuguese, held by virtue of that rank, and that of local lieutenant-general in the British army, a place next to Wellington, very much to the discontent of officers who were actually his senior. More than one

[1] See post, p. 306.

[2] Sir Henry Hardinge was Wellington's second in the duel with Lord Winchelsea.

general resigned his command in consequence, and all affected resented the supersession. Wellington was so much hampered and annoyed that in one of his despatches he says: "I wish Beresford would resign his local rank; the embarrassments and ill blood it causes are inconceivable." Yet in the first phases of the war Beresford took no very active part. He was busy with his organisation, and it prospered so well that in 1810 Wellington was able to bring some of the best Portuguese regiments into line with the British troops, and they rendered excellent service at Busaco. In the following year (1811) Beresford was afforded his first opportunity of distinction as an independent general fighting on his own field. During Hill's absence in England he was called to the command of the corps, composed of the 2nd and 3rd Divisions, with Lay's cavalry and four Portuguese brigades, which was to invest Badajoz and check the movements of Soult for its relief. Beresford seems to have inspired little confidence; he was in character and bearing a strong contrast to his predecessor; those who loved their "Daddy" Hill would not yield the same allegiance to the brusque, boisterous Irishman. In the cavalry action of Campo Mayor he suffered the 14th Light Dragoons to be drawn too far away, and to be almost cut to pieces. Then Soult came up

and forced on the battle of Albuera, when Beresford yielded to the urgent appeals of his officers to stand his ground. The position at Albuera was behind the river of that name, and Soult's main attack was on Beresford's right, where the Spaniards turned tail, and the few English were outnumbered and all but overpowered. Happily Colonel Hardinge had ordered up, on his own authority, Cole's fresh and unbroken division to the wavering right flank, and snatched victory, when it seemed assured, from Soult's grasp. Napier's account of the close of the action deserves to be written in letters of gold. It is one of the finest bursts of impassioned prose in the English language.

Albuera has been called one of the most desperate and sanguinary of battles. Soult, although beaten back, showed himself greatly superior to Beresford as a tactical leader. Napier's strictures upon the English general are very severe, excessively so perhaps. "Beresford had studied his own field of battle . . . and yet occupied it so as to render defeat almost certain; his infantry were not in hand, his inferiority in guns and cavalry was not compensated by entrenchments. He had superior numbers of infantry, on a position which was contracted to three miles; yet ten thousand never fired a shot, and three times the day was lost

and won, the allies being always fewest in number at the decisive point. . . . The person of the general-in-chief was seen everywhere, a gallant soldier! — the mind of the great commander nowhere."

Beresford protested fiercely against this estimate of his generalship, and a bitter controversy ensued, in which the practised writer got the advantage. Napier struck the last blow in reminding Beresford that he claimed to be greater than Alexander or Cæsar, in that he declared he had never made a mistake. Wellington (who, as we shall see, had the very highest opinion of Beresford) excused him on the ground that he had not the habit and experience of command on the field—precisely Napier's criticism. Wellington gave Beresford *carte blanche;* he was to fight or not, as he thought best at the time; but adds, "Had I been there" (he was delayed by an accident at Almeida), "we should have made a great thing of it." Beresford had gladly welcomed his chief's expected advent. "He wrote me," says Wellington, "to the effect that he was delighted I was coming; that he could not stand the slaughter about him nor the vast responsibility. His letter was quite in a desponding tone. It was brought to me next day, I think, by General Arbuthnot when I was at dinner at Elvas,

and I said directly, 'This won't do; write me down a victory.' The despatch (about Albuera) was altered accordingly."

It is somewhat curious that, in spite of Albuera, Wellington had the very highest opinion of Beresford. After Salamanca, where the Marshal was severely wounded, Wellington paid him a great compliment by urging that Sir Stapleton Cotton should not be given a peerage, lest it might pique Beresford into throwing up his Portuguese command. "All I can tell you is," he writes Lord Bathurst, "that the ablest man I have yet seen with the army, and that one having the largest views, is Beresford. They tell me that when I am not present he wants decision . . . but I am quite certain he is the only person capable of conducting a large concern." Lord Albemarle tells the story that when Wellington was asked at a dinner-table in the Peninsula upon whom the command should devolve in case of accidents, he named—but not without hesitation—"Beresford." Some surprise was expressed, and he went on: "I see what you mean by your looks. If it was a question of handling troops, some of you fellows might do as well, nay, better than he; but what we want now is some one to feed our troops, and I know no one fitter for the purpose than Beresford."

Lord Beresford

There are passages in the Wellington despatches that fully bear out this opinion. "I can have no objection," he writes, "to give Beresford any power; on the contrary, the greater power he has, the better it will be for the public service." Again: "It is impossible for two persons to understand each other better than Beresford and I. He is two miles from this, and I see him every day, and I believe we take pretty nearly the same view of every transaction." The Duke, whenever it was possible, consulted Beresford with regard to projected operations, and he was heard to say that there was "no one like the Marshal for seeing the weak point in a plan." One of the glimpses Larpent gives us of the two generals, Wellington and Beresford, walking up and down in close conference in the narrow street of a dirty little Spanish town, shows how deep was the connection between them. On another occasion Wellington writes: "I may venture, however, to assure you that, with the exception of Marshal Beresford, who, I believe, concurs entirely in all my opinions respecting the state of the contest and the measures to be adopted here, there is no man in the army who has taken half the pains upon the subject (the conduct of the war) than I have." Beresford, whenever it was possible, accompanied Wellington on his reconnaissances,

which, as we know, were often of the most daring character and pushed very far to the front. The Duke said afterwards that he relied greatly on the Marshal's quick eye for country, and generally on his sagacity. "If there be a weak point in any plan, Beresford is the man to see it," sums up his opinion.

After Toulouse, where he restored the battle when it had been endangered by Picton's rash advance, Beresford (now a peer of the realm) returned to Portugal, and thus missed Waterloo. There had been some talk of bringing over a portion of the Portuguese army to Belgium, but nothing came of it, no doubt to Lord Beresford's great chagrin. His position in Portugal after the war was by no means enviable; petty squabbles and ill-usage both of officers and men were very rife, and Beresford paid two visits to Rio Janeiro, where the royal family still resided, seeking redress for grievances, and when there in 1817 he was able by his vigorous measures to quell a serious rebellion. He left Portugal in 1820, and entered upon a short political career. Although elected M.P. for Waterford in 1811, and again in 1812, he had never taken his seat. But now he entered the House of Peers, and, with the loyalty of a soldier who had served with Cæsar, strenuously

W. L. Colls. sc

Marquis of Londonderry.

supported his old chief in all his political action. He was advanced to the rank of Viscount, and was at one time Master-General of the Ordnance, but retired into private life, and married in 1832 the wealthy widow of "Anastasius" Hope.

CHAPTER V

GRAHAM

Advanced age on entering the service—Early life—A Scotch laird—Terrible bereavements—Raises 90th Light Infantry—Serves in Italy; and with Moore at Corunna—Rank made substantive—Battle of Barrosa — Ciudad Rodrigo — Gallicia — Vittoria — San Sebastian—Bergen op Zoom—Long life.

THE case of Thomas Graham, Lord Lynedoch, is a curious contradiction of some modern theories in regard to military command. It is held nowadays, somewhat obstinately, and with a narrowness that ignores clear proof to the contrary, that youthful vigour is essential to good generalship, that little can be expected from the leader advanced in years. Yet we can point to Charles Napier, who won his first battle at sixty-one; Radetzky, who made the successful campaign of Novara at eighty-four. Sir Thomas Graham was over sixty when he commanded a brigade at Walcheren, and sixty-four when he took San Sebastian. Some time after that, it is true, his health broke down, but the hardships of campaigning in the Pyrenees were exceptionally severe.

Again, Graham controverts the commonly received opinion that it is essential to serve through all the grades to become proficient in the leading of troops. He jumped straight into the rank of lieutenant-colonel at forty-eight, and sixteen years later was a major-general commanding a brigade in the field. He was, in fact, a born soldier, whose genius for war came out by accident late in life, but was then incontestably proved.

A Scotch laird, born in 1748, of old family, with broad estates, he lived the life of a country gentleman, devoted to field sports, wrapped up entirely in his love for the beautiful wife whose well-known portrait is one of the finest of Gainsborough's triumphs.[1] When she was lost to him prematurely, and to his intense grief, he essayed to forget by seeking military adventure. Graham served as volunteer aide-de-camp to Lord Mulgrave at Toulon in 1792, being then forty-four. He showed so much military capacity that he was advised to raise a regiment, and did so in 1794, the Perthshire Volunteers, afterwards the famous 90th Light Infantry, a regiment which has given many distinguished officers to the British army, and two commanders-in-chief.[2] Later he added a

[1] This picture, when Mrs. Graham died, he bricked up in a wall, and it was only brought to light again long years after his bereavement.

[2] Lord Hill and Lord Wolseley.

second battalion, of which Hill became lieutenant-colonel,[1] and now claimed with some show of reason that his own rank should be made substantive. But the king (George III.) had set his face against giving high permanent status to officers who had not passed through all the junior grades. Graham's politics, which were of a Liberal bias, helped to gain him this refusal; but, although he felt it bitterly, he accepted the post of military attaché with the Austrian army in Italy, and shared its defeats at the vigorous hands of the young Napoleon. Nelson entrusted Graham with the duty of blockading the fortress of Valetta, which he performed until the French surrendered the island to Sir Ralph Abercromby. Graham served then in Egypt, and was present at the battle of Alexandria. He was still colonel of his regiment, the 90th, and would not vacate it, resolved to lose no chance of active employment. With this idea he accompanied Moore to Sweden, and was again his aide-de-camp at Corunna. It was his gallant chief's dying wish that Graham should be confirmed in his rank in the army, and on the 4th March 1809 Graham heard from the Duke of York, then commander-in-chief, that he had not failed to submit to the king "the communication

[1] See ante, p. 284.

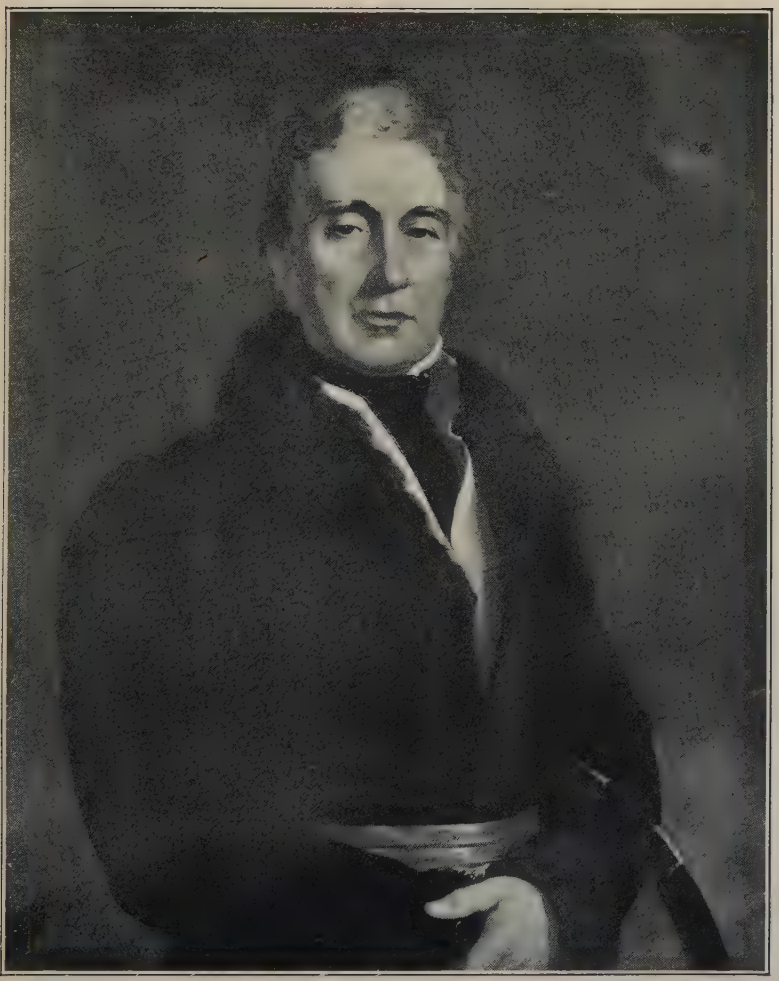
made to me by General Hope, at the dying request of the late Sir John Moore, regarding the eminent and important services performed by you in Spain, . . . and his Majesty has been pleased to direct that the established custom of the army may be departed from by your being promoted to the rank of major-general."

Graham accepted this tardy acknowledgment of his services as ample compensation for the many years of bitter disappointment. It was, as he said, a high reward to have merited the good word of such a man as Moore. Now, the seniority given him was that he would have had if his first appointment of lieutenant-colonel had been substantive, and not merely temporary rank. It put him in a fine position, and, with his other claims, entitled him to further employment. So we find him in the wretched Walcheren business in command of a brigade, and afterwards, with the local rank of lieutenant-general, in command of the British garrison at Cadiz in 1810–11.

Graham was now to have an opportunity of independent command in the field. The French had long besieged Cadiz, but Soult had been drawn away to invest Badajoz, and had left Victor alone to enforce the blockade of Cadiz. Graham proposed to fall upon Victor, taking him in reverse,

and sending a force of 5000 men round by sea. He landed at Tarifa, and joining with La Peña, the Spanish general, attacked the French at Barrosa. Deserted by his allies at the most critical moment, Graham found himself in a position of imminent danger, out of which he saw no escape but by a prompt offensive. The ready, reckless gallantry of his troops, who closed in to fight almost as they were, without any regular formation, gave him the victory, but only after a sanguinary conflict. He had but 4000 men against 9000, and La Peña's Spaniards, although largely reinforced, looked on inactive throughout. Graham was warmly congratulated by Wellington, who said that the victory would certainly have raised the siege of Cadiz had the Spaniards played their part; "I am equally certain . . . that if you had not decided with the utmost promptitude to attack the enemy, and if your own attack had not been a most vigorous one, the whole allied army would have been lost."

Graham after Barrosa joined Wellington, and was given command of the 1st Division. He contributed to the successful capture of Ciudad Rodrigo by surprising the convent of Santa Cruz six days before the final assault. He covered the siege of Badajoz, but health compelled him to pay



Sir George Huyter. *Walker & Boutall, sc.*

LORD LYNEDOCH, G.C.B.

a visit to England, thus losing him a share in the battle of Salamanca. But Graham returned to his post in January 1813, and was warmly welcomed by Wellington. "I was happy to learn . . . you were able to return to us, and hope we may make a good campaign of it. . . . I propose to take the field as early as I can, and at least to put myself in fortune's way." Graham played a leading part in the great advance from Portugal in 1813, for he led the turning movement through the rugged mountain districts of the Tras os Montes, in command of the British left. He was entrusted again, still on the left, with the outflanking attack at Vittoria, which aimed at the French line of retreat and cut them from it. Wellington gave him the immediate control of the siege of San Sebastian, and it may be that the sturdy old man was forced into errors against his judgment—errors that led to the failure of the first assault. But it was his tenacious spirit that achieved the final capture, by concentrating the whole fire of his heavy guns, which destroyed the curtain and gave an opening for the stormers. Soon after this he again left the Peninsula, being unequal to the excessive fatigues of the campaign. But he had not yet finally sheathed his sword; for when the Dutch rose against the French, a British expedition was sent

to their assistance, and it was placed under the command of Sir Thomas Graham. While he was investing Antwerp, he conceived it possible to carry the neighbouring fortress of Bergen op Zoom by a *coup de main*. The attack, however, failed.

Sir Thomas Graham was created a peer at the peace, and became Lord Lynedoch; but he fought no more. Retiring full of honours, and with a mind cured by great exploits from grief and melancholy, he lived on to a green old age, mostly at his own Perthshire home, Balgowan, where he shot and fished, and entertained his comrades and friends, until 1847, when he died, at the advanced age of ninety-six.

CHAPTER VI

PICTON

Picton's temper—Unfounded statements of his disagreements—Duke's high opinion of him—The charge of cruelty in Trinidad—Torture of Louise Calderon—Verdict of guilty never set aside, although Picton absolved—His sympathisers—The Duke of Queensberry—Picton's youth and early services—Slow promotion—Peninsula and the fighting 3rd—"Brave old Picton"—The commissary—Waterloo—Death on the field.

WELLINGTON called Picton "a rough, foul-mouthed devil as ever lived," and Napier has given colour to the picture when contrasting him with Craufurd, after the Coa: "The stern countenance, robust frame, saturnine complexion, caustic speech, and austere demeanour of the first (Picton), promised little sympathy with the short thick figure, dark flashing eyes, quick movements, and fiery temper of the second; nor did they often meet without a quarrel." The last statement is not borne out by other evidence. An officer high upon Picton's staff declares that the one general "never expressed himself in any but the most friendly terms of Craufurd." "I certainly upon one occasion heard him observe, 'That d——d

fighting fellow Craufurd will some day get us into a scrape,' but this was not uttered at all in an unfriendly tone." Napier also implies that Picton was on bad terms with Wellington. "It was common opinion," he says, "that the Duke and Picton did not get on smoothly together when they happened to have personal intercourse, which was seldom." Wellington himself entirely repudiated this later in life, and assured Picton's biographer, "not only that I was not on bad terms with Sir Thomas Picton, but that in the whole course of the period during which I was in relation with him, I do not recollect even a difference of opinion, much less anything of the nature of a quarrel." The Duke goes on to say that he had asked for Picton to be sent out to him in the Peninsula, encouraged to do so by the report he had had of his fitness from General Miranda, who had known him in the West Indies; and that "he had never reason to regret" —on the contrary, numberless reasons to rejoice— that he had solicited his appointment. "It was made at the moment when an unmerited prejudice existed against Sir Thomas Picton, the recollection of which was effaced by his services."

Picton's temper might well have been soured, his demeanour affected, by the painful affair to which his great leader refers. He was nearly sacrificed to

the emotional philanthropy that accepts an over-coloured story as gospel, and is ready to condemn a public servant too hastily, on imperfect grounds. Picton was arraigned by public opinion for an offence the mere suspicion of which will always rouse indignation in England. He was charged with cruelty—the harsh, inhuman abuse of his powers as a proconsul; and the story as it was put forward might well inflame the public mind. The blame rests with those who by malevolence and mis-statement sought to sully Picton's good name—chiefly with Colonel Fullarton, a co-commissioner in the government of Trinidad, who greedily seized upon a small matter, and exaggerated an excusable error into a shameful and atrocious offence. Picton was accused of having tortured a poor girl who would not give evidence in a case of theft; to have "applied the question," or ordered it to be applied, and in the form of "picketing," by which the victim is compelled to stand upon a pointed peg with one foot, the body being raised by the arms from the ground. The act was not denied, but it could be in a measure justified, and it was in accordance with the existing law in Trinidad.

The case arose out of the robbery of one Ruiz, a tobacconist, to the amount of £400, and suspicion

fell upon a man who was known to be in familiar intercourse with the female servant and housekeeper of Ruiz, a young girl named Louise Calderon. She was arrested and examined, but would not speak. Whereupon, following the usual procedure on the island, the judge applied to Picton, the supreme authority, for leave to apply the question. Picton consented, and thus laid himself open to a criminal indictment, which took its course later in England, where he was arrested and tried in the Court of King's Bench in 1806. The prosecution was of the most rancorous kind; the facts were grossly distorted, and by no means justified the impassioned language of counsel. It was asserted that Louise Calderon was under fourteen years of age, whereas it is certain that she was a good deal older; it was alleged that the torture (the picketing) was applied with much severity, that the girl fell down, in appearance dead, and there was no physician or surgeon to assist. Yet the truth was, that but little pain was inflicted, that confession was almost immediate, that the girl was so little affected that she walked, with a cigar in her mouth, from the gaol, more than half a mile, to the scene of the robbery, where she pointed out the manner in which it had been effected. There had been a surgeon present at the picketing; there was no necessity for

one then or afterwards, as the feet were not swollen or injured. The rebutting evidence was so strong that no verdict would have been given had not the prosecution brought forward a witness, Vargas, from Trinidad, to swear that the Spanish law—the law under which the question was applied—was not really in force in the island. On this a general verdict of guilty was returned against General Picton.

An appeal was made against this mistaken finding, and a new trial was permitted. It was clearly shown that Vargas was perjured; the old Spanish law was actually in force in Trinidad, and Picton had been distinctly instructed to administer it as he found it. Fresh evidence, altogether in his favour, was adduced from Trinidad; for there the strongest sympathy was felt for him, and the inhabitants subscribed to defray the legal expenses of the trial, and presented him with a sword. The second trial ended with a special verdict, accepting it as fact that torture was legal at the time in Trinidad, and absolving the defendant of malice against Louise Calderon "independent of the illegality of the act," a rider that shows a British jury would not tolerate the infliction of torture. Picton was never fully acquitted; as the result of this verdict his recognisances were respited until "the court should

further order," which it never did, and the general opinion in legal circles was that, had judgment been delivered, it would have been against Picton; "but that, on consideration of the merits, it would have been followed by a punishment so slight, and so little commensurate with the magnitude of the questions embraced by the case, as to have reflected but little credit upon the prosecution."

Picton had many sympathisers. The testimonials sent in his favour from Trinidad were of the most cordial nature, and took the substantial form, as we have seen, of subscriptions in cash and a sword. The first he would not accept, when, shortly after the trial, a terrible calamity befell the principal town, which was destroyed by fire. Picton at once sent back the whole amount, to be applied in the work of charitable relief. He found another staunch friend in the eccentric Duke of Queensberry, who conveyed a very kindly message to the persecuted general, assuring him "of his entire conviction of his innocence, and of his high sense of Picton's character." That this was no empty compliment was further proved by his generous offer of £10,000, a sum placed entirely at his disposal for the defence of the action. Picton's rugged but manly nature was greatly touched by this noble offer, and he wrote at once to the Duke of Queensberry to say

that "had it not been for the kindness and generosity of a near relation (his uncle) who has lent me his fortune to defend my character, I should most readily have availed myself of your disinterested liberality." They met subsequently, but only once. When Picton was on the eve of starting for Spain, and waiting one day at his favourite house of call, the Grosvenor coffee-house,[1] the Duke's card was brought in to him, with a request that Picton would go out and speak to his Grace, who apologised, saying: "I am too infirm, General Picton, to leave my carriage; you must forgive me, but I was anxious to shake hands with you and bid you farewell. And I have one favour to ask—that you will sometimes write to me. We get such vague and contradictory accounts in the newspapers that I should like, when you have leisure to write, to know the real truth." Picton readily promised, and wrote as long as the Duke lived, which was only to the end of the year. He left Picton a legacy of £5000.

I have been led by this Trinidad story to omit some details of Picton's early career. He was the son of a country gentleman in Pembrokeshire, and obtained a commission in 1771, at the early age of thirteen. He did not join his regiment of the

[1] There were no military clubs in those days.

12th Foot for a couple of years, and remained at the military academy of a Frenchman, M. Lachée. Then he went to Gibraltar, where, in the leisure of garrison duty, he studied the Spanish language, and rambled through the neighbouring mountains and cork woods, as British subalterns do to this day. It was this knowledge of Spanish that helped him to the unlucky governorship of Trinidad. He left the Rock, on promotion, just before the great siege, and thus lost that interesting and exciting experience. Five years afterwards, too, he came in for the army reduction, and spent twelve long years, from 1783 to 1794, on half-pay. In 1794, however, renewed hostilities gave him a hope of re-employment, and he went, quite on his own account, to the West Indies. He had a slight acquaintance with Sir John Vaughan, the commander-in-chief, who at once named him to a captaincy in the 17th Foot, and appointed him aide-de-camp. From this he soon passed to major in the 68th, and the post of deputy quartermaster-general, in which he was presently superseded. Then Sir Ralph Abercromby came out in command, and in the active operations that followed Major Picton found abundant opportunities of distinction. He took part, as one of Abercromby's staff, in the capture of St. Lucia and St. Vincent, and was thrown into close connection with

soldiers like Hope and Moore. Sir Ralph Abercromby had a very high opinion of him, and he appointed him to the governorship of Trinidad, because he thought him quite the most qualified man he could find for the situation. The island was then a hotbed of crime, the refuge of malefactors, of pirates and privateers, who spread depredations and dismay through the neighbouring isles. The population was made up of fugitive desperadoes who had been concerned in the rebellions and massacres at places near. In the island, "murders and robberies were committed with impunity, widows and orphans despoiled, inheritances plundered." So infamous was the character of the people of Trinidad, that no person coming from it was permitted to remain in a neighbouring island without giving bond in £1000 for good behaviour. The proof of "usual or frequent residences" in Trinidad was *ipso facto* enough to commit a person to gaol. That Picton with a very inadequate force—300 men of the 57th, and 200 foreigners and blacks—was able to maintain order, crush a dangerous conspiracy, and resist Spanish aggression, showed him to be a vigorous administrator. But for the unfortunate affair of the "picketed" Louise Calderon, his governorship would have been considered an unmixed success.

From the various causes stated, Picton's advancement had been slow. He was nearly fifty before he became a colonel, and he only reached the rank of major-general in 1810, when he was fifty-two, and therefore much senior in point of years to his colleagues in the Peninsula. In person at that time he is described as a tall, large man, six feet one in height, with a stern face, but his smile "dispelled at once a repulsive expression which sometimes hung upon his brow"; keen eyes, a sharp quick voice which commanded attention; "the earnestness of his delivery and the power of his language impressed the hearer with conviction."[1] In the field his voice altered and became full, deep, and impressive, and had an almost magnetic effect upon the men he led. One who heard him rebuke his division after the pillage of a wine store was greatly prejudiced against him as he looked at "the dark, gloomy, forbidding face, which deepened when he opened his mouth and began to pour forth a torrent of abuse on us for our conduct." Yet, although no man could blame with more severity when occasion required, he was no niggard of his praise when it was deserved. Nothing could surpass his calm intrepidity and bravery in danger; and his presence in battle had

[1] See ante, p. 319, Wellington's remarks.

the effect of a talisman, so much had his skill and valour gained upon the men under his command.

Wellington, as has been said, asked that Picton might be sent out to him. When the general joined, he was given the command of the 3rd Division, which he retained till the end of the war. He was so far concerned in Craufurd's rash action on the Coa that he is said to have been in support, and yet refused to come up—a statement that tends to show Picton's good sense, for it was certainly Wellington's wish to avoid a general engagement then, and that the arrival of the 3rd Division would probably have precipitated. Picton's division was last but one on the left at Busaco, and had to meet the attack of the second corps (Regnier's). It was hardly pressed, and might have given way but for the prompt support of Wellington; then Picton's reserves drove all before them. An amusing incident occurred in the early morning. When the piquets were attacked and repulsed, Picton charged at the head, waving a red nightcap in which he had slept at the bivouac.

Picton, with his "fighting 3rd," was always to the front in the pursuit of Massena from Torres Vedras. It was indeed conspicuous then, and afterwards through the Peninsula, for "its daring enterprise and indefatigable activity," often in strong

contrast with discreditable marauding. As when the 88th made a splendid charge at Fuentes d'Onoro, and Picton commended them with, "Well done, 88th!" "Are we the greatest blackguards in the army now?" retorted voices, reminding him of some former reproaches. "No, no," answered Picton readily; "you are brave and gallant soldiers. This day has redeemed your character." It was to these splendid soldiers that he said, "We'll waste no powder, Rangers, to-day; the business must be done with cold iron." They were his "brave ragged rascals." "I don't care how they dress," he once said, "so long as they mind their fighting." At El Boden he saved his division, which he held, as always, entirely under command; the battalions, preserving their beautiful order, were ready to form square at any moment, and quite imposed upon the French cavalry. Picton's people were among the first in at Ciudad Rodrigo, and one of his brigadiers (Mackinnon) was killed by the first explosion; the general himself, with a voice of "twenty trumpet power," controlling the fight. Picton's division took the castle at Badajoz, headed by their general, who was soon struck down. Wellington's gratitude for the last feat was great, and he wrote Lord Liverpool that "General Picton has inspired a confidence in the army, and exhibited

an example of science and bravery which has been surpassed by no other officer. His exertions in the attack cannot fail to excite the most lively feelings of admiration."

Picton missed Salamanca through a dangerous illness, but Pakenham led them nobly in the great counter-stroke. When their own chief returned to duty from England, he was received with vociferous shouts by his men; they gathered round him as he rode into camp, with cries of "Here comes our brave old father," and "Three cheers for old Picton." He was in time for Vittoria, and we have an authentic account of his impatience that day, waiting for orders to advance. An aide-de-camp came past him, looking for the 7th Division, which had not yet come up. "What are you to tell him?" Picton insisted upon knowing. "To attack that bridge, the 4th and 6th Divisions to support." "Tell Lord Wellington I mean to take that bridge in less than ten minutes, and the 4th and 6th Divisions may support or not as they please." Then, turning to his troops, he shouted, "Come on, ye rascals! Come on, ye fighting villains!" and he kept his word. His conduct and that of his division was the admiration of the whole army.

Picton held the ground against Soult in the

critical fighting at Sauroren, and shortly after returned for a brief space to England, again to recruit his health, and receive the thanks of the House of Commons, having not long before been elected M.P. for Carmarthen. But he was soon back at the seat of war, and was engaged in the closing episodes, being as usual ever in the forefront. He was always at the head of his division, stick in hand—for he almost always carried one, and used it to tap with on his horse's mane when full of impatience, or to wave over his head as he pointed with it to the enemy's lines. Sometimes, however, he exchanged it for an umbrella, and it was so in the advance on Vittoria, when he beat Wellington's butler about the head with it for impeding the march of his division. The man was escorting headquarters baggage, and objected to make way, when Picton, who was no respecter of persons, thrashed him and threatened him with the provost-marshal. A story of this kind substantiates the other of Picton's threat to hang the commissary if he failed to bring up the rations for his division. The story is now credited, but on no convincing evidence, to General Craufurd.[1]

[1] Wellington's reply to the injured commissary when he complained is historical. "Did he (whoever it was, Picton or Craufurd) say that? Then you may depend upon it he will keep his word."

Sir Thomas Picton was in private life, living at his seat in Wales, when the Waterloo storm burst. He was at once offered a command, but accepted only on the condition that he was to serve under Wellington. Then, with that assurance gained, he made ready for the field in such hot haste that he reached Belgium ahead of his uniforms. Many strange presentiments are reported as concurring to predict it would be his last campaign. He must have suffered from some severe mental strain, for Wellington told Stanhope[1] that Picton came to him shortly before Waterloo and said, "My lord, I must give up. I am grown so nervous that, when there is service to be done, it works upon my mind, so that it is impossible for me to sleep at nights. I cannot possibly stand it, and I shall be forced to retire." Poor fellow! he was killed a few days afterwards.

He preserved his indomitable pluck to the last. He said to his aide-de-camp, Tyler, at the end of the hard fighting at Quatre Bras, "I shall begin to think that I cannot be killed after this." Yet at that moment he was badly wounded. A musket-ball had broken his ribs and produced other internal injuries; but he concealed his hurts, lest he should be prevented from taking part in the great battle

[1] Stanhope says "in France." It must, of course, have been in Belgium.

that was imminent. He was killed in the second phase of Waterloo,[1] when Ney assailed the left centre, and was met by Kempt's and Pack's brigades of Picton's corps. Picton headed the charge of the latter, and it advanced with such determination that it appalled the enemy. It was a most critical moment; the success gained was triumphant in the end, but the price paid was heavy, for Picton was killed.

The brave soldier, whom a rancorous spirit had cruelly maligned in early life, was greatly honoured after death. A splendid public funeral, a noble monument, the sorrow of a nation, were the tributes paid to his heroic services. His conduct in war may be held up as an example to the coming generations of British soldiers.

[1] See ante, p. 197.

CHAPTER VII

CRAUFURD

Birth and early studies abroad—Serves in India—At Monte Video—Brooding melancholy—The retreat on Corunna—"An iron man"—The Light Division in the Peninsula—Splendid march to Talavera—The Coa—Outpost duty—Busaco—Leave to England—Resumes command—Fuentes d'Onoro—Ciudad Rodrigo—Meets death in the breach.

CRAUFURD'S preparation for his profession was more practical and thorough than was at all customary in those days. He travelled abroad at nineteen, soon after he had gained the rank of captain, and studied the military art in Germany, visited many battle-fields, and became personally known to Frederick the Great. At the same time he gained fluency in German, and his knowledge of the language stood him in good stead years afterwards, when the Hussars of the German Legion were under his command in the Peninsula. His elder brother, Charles Craufurd, also a distinguished officer, had been equerry to the Duke of York, and commissioner to Austrian head-quarters. This added to Robert's experience, for

the brothers were much together upon the Continent, and, later, Robert Craufurd was employed on special missions with Austrian armies in the field. Before this, however, he rose through the regimental grades by no means rapidly, having regard to his family interest; for his brother Charles married the widow of the Duke of Newcastle, and wielded much political influence. Robert, although a captain in the 75th at nineteen, waited three-and-twenty years for the rank of colonel, and in the interval served in India, where he took part in the early wars against Tippoo Sahib. His real opportunity came when he entered Parliament as M.P. for East Retford, and established a close friendship with Mr. Windham, then Secretary of State for Colonies and War. Mr. Windham nominated him to the command of a special expedition, a selection that evoked loud murmurs, for Craufurd was of junior rank, and the command that of a lieutenant-general. Windham stood firm to his appointment; but when Craufurd's force was sent on without landing from the Cape of Good Hope to South America, the chief command was vested in the ill-fated and incompetent General Whitelocke. Craufurd's part in the disastrous affair of Monte Video was, however, creditable to himself, and when his pusillanimous chief surrendered, he offered to place himself at the head

of the troops and cut his way through. "But this unfortunate affair," says his biographer, "embittered his mind to the very end of his career, and much increased his constitutional tendency to brooding." Fits of deep depression often alternated with the fiercest energy in Craufurd—the reaction so often seen in men of his fiery nature. Again, the brilliant audacity he often showed at the outposts was probably his protests against the vacillation and timid counsels that had involved him in the disgrace of Monte Video. It is certain that his contempt for his wretched chief was unbounded, and some said that he strove hard to have Whitelocke shot. The feeling of indignation was universal; even among the rank and file it was the rule to give the toast, when drinking, "Success to grey hairs, bad luck to white locks!"

Robert Craufurd was the friend and comrade of Sir John Moore, and under him he commanded the Light Brigade in the retreat upon Corunna. He was long in charge of the rear-guard, and conducted it with conspicuous ability. At Orense his brigade was united with that of Charles Alten, and separating from Moore, took a different line of retreat through the mountains upon Vigo, an independent operation successfully accomplished by Craufurd under adverse circumstances, that brought out his

indomitable character. "He was an iron man; nothing daunted him; nothing turned him from his purpose." It was his fixed resolve to bring off his men in safety, and this he felt could only be effected by an iron discipline, enforced with a severity that was ruthless, cruel even, yet salutary, and indeed indispensable. Nothing could have done it but the firm hand of the commander, hard, heavy, and unrelaxing, the magnetic control of his stern eye, his unremitting vigilance, watching ever for the slightest symptom of insubordination or faltering weakness, his prompt unhesitating infliction of punishment where he felt that an example must be made. "He would have no straggling, no marauding; no murmurs at the length of the way, the difficulties, the almost intolerable hardships of the retreat. Men quite barefoot, pallid, wayworn, half-starved, reeling as though they were drunk, but only from fatigue, drenched to the skin, in ragged uniforms and shattered accoutrements; yet still," says one of their number, "still we held on resolutely. Craufurd was not to be daunted by long miles, fatigue, or foul weather. Many a man caught courage from his stern eye and gallant bearing."

He was inexorable when an example must be made. If men left the ranks, he would halt the whole brigade, order a drumhead court-martial,

MAJOR-GENERAL ROBERT CRAUFURD.

and flog the culprits on the spot, although the French were close at his heels. In one case the colonel of the regiment pleaded for three men as good soldiers who had borne their part stoutly in the fight. "I order *you*, sir, to do your duty. These men *shall* be punished." One man took his flogging as he stood, there were no halberds ready, and afterwards resumed his place in the ranks; only his devoted wife, who was in the retreat, carried the knapsack that he could not strap upon his bleeding back. When the punishment was ended, Craufurd gave notice that he would repeat it whenever he caught any man disobeying his orders. It may well seem to modern ideas that this severity was carried too far, but those whom he thus held together in that harassing retreat admitted its necessity. Harris, who was a private in the ranks of the 95th (now the Rifle Brigade), bears witness that "no man but one formed of stuff like General Craufurd could have saved the brigade from perishing altogether, and if he flogged two he saved hundreds from death by his management." It is said of this stern, inflexible leader, that although he was greatly disliked by officers, he was never unpopular with his men. He was always on the side of the latter, and never was he seen more angered than when he caught an officer being carried across a river pick-a-back upon

a soldier's shoulders. "Put him down instantly," roared the general to the man; and to the officer he cried, "Go back, sir, and come through the water like the others." His ascendency over the troops was immense. If he (Craufurd) stopped his horse, and halted to deliver one of his stern reprimands, you would see half-a-dozen men, unshaven, shoeless, and savage riflemen, standing for the moment leaning upon their weapons, and scowling up in his face as he scolded; and when he dashed his spurs into his reeking horse, they would place their rifles upon their shoulders and hobble after him again. He was sometimes to be seen in the front, then in the rear, and then he would fall in with them again in the midst, dismounted and marching on foot, that the men might see he took an equal share in the toils they were enduring.

Craufurd brought off his brigade in safety, but they landed in England a deplorably ragged and squalid band. There the three regiments, the 43rd, 52nd, and 95th, were quickly re-formed, their ranks re-filled, and they returned to Portugal under their old commander, to form the nucleus of the gallant Light Division. When Craufurd landed, Wellington's army was committed to the campaign of Talavera, and it was Craufurd's desire to join him without delay. Then followed that famous march

which is still recorded as one of the most splendid achievements of infantry. Craufurd was moving steadily forward, his men suffering greatly from the July sun; heat apoplexy claimed its victims, and two men of the 52nd committed suicide to escape the torments of the road. Then, on the 28th July, having been already three weeks on the march, Craufurd met news that the army had been engaged and was in full retreat. Spanish fugitives were already streaming to the rear; to reinforce the front was all Craufurd's care. The weakest, a small handful of fifty, were weeded out of his ranks, and he began his memorable march under the strict regulations he had instituted, and which became the standing orders of his division. No man might fall out by the way without a pass from his officer; when he rejoined his company he was paraded before the regimental surgeons, and if his case was seen to be one of skulking, he was at once tried by drumhead court-martial. "Thus frequently, when almost dying with thirst,[1] we were obliged to pass springs of the finest water by the roadside untasted. But all this apparent severity, as we afterwards learnt, was considered as absolutely essential to the great purpose General Craufurd had in view—despatch." As the brigade advanced

[1] Costello, p. 31.

more and more runaways were encountered, spreading the wildest rumours of disaster and defeat. Craufurd's men "hastened rather than slackened their impetuous pace, and leaving only seventeen stragglers behind, in twenty-six hours crossed the field of battle (Talavera) in a close and compact body, having in that time crossed over sixty-two English miles in the hottest season of the year, each man carrying from fifty to sixty pounds weight upon his shoulders."[1]

Craufurd's one independent action, that on the Coa, has been much criticised, and it was condemned by Wellington, as has been said on a previous page.[2] He stayed too long beyond the river, no doubt, but it was of advantage, although so hazardous, and the whole of the antecedent operations were of the most brilliant and daring character. With one weak division—barely 2500 men, and 400 cavalry (the 1st German Hussars)—he held his ground to the last moment, although opposed to two entire French army corps and some 6000 cavalry. No finer commander of the outposts has ever been known than Craufurd. He made himself intimately acquainted with his ground

[1] Sir George Napier, who made the march, calls it fifty miles in twenty-two hours.

[2] See ante, p. 132.

directly he occupied, posted his men himself, and was in close personal communication with the piquet officers, even with single sentinels. He was greatly aided by the full knowledge of outpost work possessed both by the famous regiments trained by Sir John Moore, and those excellent troops the German Hussars, with whom Craufurd could converse fluently in their own tongue. The vigilance and alertness of Craufurd's men were always remarkable.[1] The people of the country were also on our side, and kept him fully informed of all movements, otherwise his position would have been perilous and untenable.

"For three months Craufurd kept a weak division within two hours' march of 60,000 men, . . . but this did not satisfy his feverish thirst for distinction, and, forgetting his stay beyond the Coa was a matter of sufferance and not of real strength, he with headstrong ambition resolved, in defiance of reason and the reiterated orders of his general, to fight on the right bank." Thus Napier the historian; his brother George says (and both were present) that Craufurd let his vanity get the better of his judgment, and delayed so long "that at last

[1] Their colonel met another English colonel and asked how he was. "Tolerably well," replied the latter, "considering that I am obliged to sleep with one eye open." "By Gott," replied the German, "I never sleeps at all."

the enemy made a sudden attack." Wellington put it less strongly, and merely said that "unfortunately Craufurd did not begin to retire till the last moment." The result was that the whole force was nearly lost, many valuable lives were sacrificed. It was necessary to withdraw across the Coa by one narrow bridge in the face of almost overwhelming numbers. Only the splendid courage of his splendid division saved it from destruction; officers and men emulated each other in deeds of brilliant self-sacrificing heroism.

At Busaco, Craufurd, "in a happy mood for command, made masterly dispositions." He faced Ney, and waited till the attack was fully developed, and the enemy was within a very few yards of him, to head a charge that hurled them back beaten, "driven like sheep from the mountain side." Soon after this he went on short leave to England, and missed the minor operations in which the Light Division was engaged. Wellington had some difficulty in saving Craufurd from supersession, there were so many generals senior to him; but on his return, in April 1811, Wellington wrote: "You will find your division in its old quarters, and the sooner you can come up to them the better." He rejoined them in time to take part in the battle of Fuentes d'Onoro. At Fuente Guinaldo, Craufurd was late in his

march of concentration, and was sharply reprimanded by Wellington, who, however, valued him too highly to be long annoyed. "He knew his merits, and humoured him. It was surprising what he bore from him at times"[1]—absence from an inspection parade, neglect of orders or the substitution of his own, and other headstrong acts, which in any one else Wellington would have visited with more than mere displeasure.

Craufurd's last appearance on the stirring scene was now approaching, and he was to make his exit in the most gallant fashion. He was mortally wounded in the desperate assault of Ciudad Rodrigo. The 3rd and Light Divisions were charged with the assault of the breaches, Craufurd's men having that known as "the Lesser." He harangued them before they started, reminding them that the eyes of their country were upon them. "Be steady; be cool; be firm in the assault. The town must be yours to-night." Then, when the signal rocket was fired, he cried, "Now, lads, for the breach!" and taking up a commanding position, encouraged them by voice and gesture until he was struck down. A musket-ball pierced his lungs and entered his spine.

He died of his wounds, and was sincerely

[1] Larpent, p. 85.

mourned by all who knew him. In his own division his name was pronounced with "expressions of the most profound reverence and poignant sorrow." Every man turned out to attend his funeral; all the generals were present—Wellington, Beresford, Castaños, and the rest; all the staff. Six veterans carried the coffin, not a dry eye among them, and "the symptoms of grief were such as men show when they lose parent or child." Wellington wrote his requiem in a few choice words, expressing his sorrow and regret that his Majesty should have been "deprived of the services, and I of the assistance, of an officer of tried talents and experience, who was an ornament to his profession, and was calculated to render the most important services to the country."

CHAPTER VIII

HOPE, COLE, LEITH, PACK, ETC.

Sir John Hope at the Adour—Cole: an obedient lieutenant: his hospitality—Kempt: from Cox's to Governor-General—Leith—Pack—Byng—Colville—Dickson—Gomm—De Lancey.

MANY good soldiers remain to be noticed a little more in detail than in the opening of this Part.

Hope.

The Hon. Sir John Hope, an elder officer, did not join in the Peninsula until after Vittoria, when the question of seniority was settled by Wellington's advancement to the rank of field-marshal. Hope had already seen service in Spain, in the retreat to Corunna, where he succeeded to the command on Moore's death. Previous to that he had been actively engaged in the West Indies and in Egypt; he had gone to Hanover with Cathcart, and to Sweden with Moore. At Walcheren he commanded a division, but, like the rest, gained no laurels, and in 1813 he took Graham's

place in command of an army corps, being then next in seniority, but not second in command, to Wellington.

Hope was heartily welcomed by his great chief, who said afterwards that he thought him the ablest man in the Peninsular army. Hope was of soldierly mien and polished beauty, gifted with strong common-sense, and having a high ideal of duty. It was his fortune to exercise quasi-independent command for a time, and his passage of the Adour was a noble achievement; only a great general could have given practical effect to the daring plans of his still greater chief. Wellington's only anxiety was lest he might lose Hope. "Like every one else, I have the highest opinion of him;" "every day convinces me of his worth," but "we shall lose him if he continues to expose himself as he has done during the last three days." He would never take shelter; stood erect among the sharp-shooters, and on one occasion his hat and coat were both shot through, and he was wounded in the leg.

Sir Thomas Hope eventually succeeded to the family honours, and became fourth Lord Hopetoun.

Sir T. Lawrence. W. L. Colls. sc.

Sir Lowry Cole.

Cole.

The Hon. Lowry Cole was a son of the Earl of Enniskillen, who made soldiering his profession, and climbed the tree rapidly. He was a major at twenty-one, having then six years' service, and a lieutenant-colonel the following year in the Coldstream Guards. He served on the staff, he sat in Parliament, and he seized every chance of seeing active service. At Maida he was brigadier, and second in command; but he had differences with Stuart, and left Sicily, to get soon afterwards (1809) the command of the 4th Division in the Peninsula. It was said of him that he had not the same genius for war as Picton or Craufurd, but that he was more obedient. Cole always claimed to have himself commanded that decisive advance of his division at Albuera which saved the day, and which is commonly believed to have been an inspiration of Hardinge's, then a young officer on the staff. In the Peninsula, Cole was known for his hospitality; he kept a liberal table, and gave the best dinners. Wellington placed him first among the campaigning Amphitryons. Cole was at Waterloo, and did good service, but he obtained no reward in rank, and was bitterly disappointed that he was not made a peer or a baronet.

Kempt.

Sir James Kempt, who lived to a great age, and filled the highest offices, was of small stature and unassuming manners, popular with every one, and a really clever man. He did not rise very rapidly, and was handicapped by nine years' half-pay, during which time he became a clerk at Cox & Greenwood's, and personally known to the Duke of York. When he had helped to raise the 113th, and became a major, he went on the staff, and served as aide-de-camp to both Sir Ralph Abercromby and Sir David Dundas (of the "manœuvres," and afterwards adjutant-general). He was in Sicily, at Maida; in America, as assistant quartermaster-general, till 1811; and at last in Spain, with the local rank of major-general, and the command of a brigade under Picton. It fell to Kempt to replace Picton at the storming of Badajoz, and after his chief's death at Waterloo. In later years, on the express recommendation of the Duke of Wellington, he was sent to Canada as Governor-General, and he was at one time Master-General of the Ordnance, with a seat in the Cabinet.

Leith.

Leith was a Scotch general officer, who commanded a division throughout the Peninsula with great skill and judgment. Having studied in the military school at Lille, he served a good deal on the staff, as aide-de-camp to Boyd, Lieutenant-Governor of Gibraltar, to Generals O'Hara and David Dundas; he was in command of a brigade under Moore, and afterwards was under Hill, with the general charge of the division, so as to release Hill for higher duties. Then he got the 5th Division to himself, and led it at Badajoz and Salamanca, where he was badly wounded. He returned from England in time to command at the final assault upon San Sebastian, and served through the rest of the war. He missed Waterloo by being sent to recover Barbadoes for Louis XVIII., and was for some time Governor of the Leeward Islands.

Pack.

The record of Sir Denis Pack is one of unbroken fighting from 1791 to 1815. The son of the Dean of Kilkenny, he became a cornet in 1791, and a captain in the 5th Dragoon Guards in 1795. In those four years he served in Flanders,

at Quiberon, and in Ireland against the French invasion under Humbert, whom he escorted as a prisoner from the south to Dublin. He was colonel of the 71st at the Cape of Good Hope, and in Monte Video with Whitelocke; he fought at Vimiero and Corunna, went to Walcheren, and at last settled down as a brigadier in the Portuguese army in 1810, with which he was engaged at Busaco, Almeida, Ciudad Rodrigo, Salamanca, and the retreat from Burgos. During the operations in the Pyrenees at Sauroren, and afterwards in the south of France, he commanded the 6th Division of Wellington's army. At Waterloo he had the second brigade under Picton.

Byng.

The Hon. Sir John Byng, another fighting brigadier, who when under forty was a major-general, and being strongly recommended to Wellington by the Duke of York, was given a command under Hill. Byng was hotly engaged at Vittoria, and in the fighting in the Pyrenees showed a very firm front at Roncesvalles, and afterwards at Sauroren. He commanded the second brigade of Guards at Waterloo.

Colville.

The Hon. Sir Charles Colville was an ensign at eleven, and joined as a lieutenant at sixteen. At twenty he was a captain in the 13th Foot, and served with it for nineteen years in the West Indies, Bermuda, Egypt, and was a brigadier at the capture of Martinique. He was major-general commanding one of Picton's brigades from 1810, and was greatly trusted by that enterprising leader. At the storming of Badajoz he commanded the 4th Division; while, finally, at Waterloo he was condemned to inaction on the far right flank, as we have seen.

Dickson.

Sir Alexander Dickson, who became Wellington's right hand as commander of the artillery, left Woolwich in 1793, at twenty-one, and served at the capture of Minorca, and at Buenos Ayres. He was brigade major of artillery at the passage of the Douro, after which he joined Beresford, and commanded the newly organised Portuguese artillery. His sterling qualities were soon exhibited in this post, and recognised by Wellington, who gradually advanced him to more and more responsible

functions. He was a master of details, even the most minute and trifling, most methodical and painstaking, with great powers of work, and rendered excellent service at the great sieges in Spain. In due course he rose to the command of Wellington's artillery, although a comparatively junior officer. He was chief at Vittoria, and in all the great battles in the Pyrenees, the passage of the Bidassoa, the Nive, Nivelle, Orthez, and Toulouse. At Waterloo he reverted to the command of a battery of horse artillery, but during the battle and at Quatre Bras he was in personal attendance on Sir George Wood, who led the whole artillery.

Gomm.

Sir William Gomm, who lived to be commander-in-chief in India and a field-marshal, was an ensign at ten years of age, having been given the commission in reward for his father's services, who was killed at the storming of Guadaloupe. He was not a little helped by an aunt, who brought him up, and who was governess in the royal family. Gomm at fifteen made the campaign of Flanders, but after that he spent three years at the military school recently established at High Wycombe, where he studied staff duties under Colonel Howard Douglas.

Gomm first and last was a staff-officer, and a cultivated one, holding many appointments, always in the quartermaster-general's department: assistant quartermaster-general in Copenhagen, again in Portugal, and with Moore at Corunna; assistant quartermaster-general at Walcheren, and then again in the Peninsula, where he was employed to the end of the war. He was in most of the fighting: at Fuentes d'Onoro, Ciudad Rodrigo, Salamanca, Burgos, in the retreat from which he led Leith's division; again, he led the advance of Graham's corps in 1813 through the wild mountain tracks of the Tras os Montes, most of which he had previously reconnoitred and surveyed. At Quatre Bras and Waterloo he was on the staff of Picton's division. Gomm, who was made a K.C.B. and transferred from the 9th Regiment to the Coldstream Guards, was a typical staff-officer of the class that worked[1]—quiet, industrious, and of high usefulness, as Wellington was fully aware.

De Lancey.

The career of Sir William De Lancey was cut short by his death at Waterloo, but he was of the same type as Gomm, and would no doubt have

[1] See ante, p. 114.

risen to the highest honours if he had been spared. He came of a loyal New York family of Huguenot descent, and his family having left the States, he became a cornet in 1792, served in India and the West Indies, first in cavalry and then in infantry, till 1802, when he joined the quartermaster-general's department, and remained on the staff till his death. He was repeatedly mentioned in despatches for his gallantry and good service, at the Douro, Ciudad Rodrigo, Vittoria (where he was deputy quartermaster-general to Sir Thomas Graham). He filled the same post with marked usefulness in the Waterloo campaign, and was greatly esteemed by the Duke. He was at Wellington's side when struck in the back by a ricochet shot, and was thought to be killed. Next day the Duke saw him still alive, and cheerily told him he would be like the man in "Castle Rackrent" who heard what his friends said of him after he was dead. Wellington told this to Rogers, adding, "Poor fellow! we knew each other ever since we were boys. But I had no time to be sorry. I went on with the army, and never saw him again."

Lady De Lancey, a sister of Captain Basil Hall, R.N., and a bride of just three months' standing, accompanied her husband to Belgium, but was sent back to Antwerp during the fighting. She rejoined

W. H. Ward & Co., sc.

SIR WM. HOWE DE LANCEY.

her poor husband, however, and nursed him tenderly till his death. I have been privileged to read a manuscript journal of Lady De Lancey's kept during this terrible time, and remember it as the most beautiful and touching, yet unconscious, tribute to her own fine nature and true womanhood that has ever been penned.

CHAPTER IX

MOORE

Parentage—Early studies—Service in America; in Corsica—Conflict with Sir Gilbert Elliot—Promoted brigadier-general—West Indies—Ireland—Egypt—The nucleus of the Light Division at Shorncliffe Camp—Sicily—Sweden—Portugal; and advance into Spain—Retreat on Corunna; and death—General estimate of that campaign.

ONE distinguished soldier must not be omitted from the list of Wellington's contemporaries, a general whom Wellington was willing to serve under, who under a happier fate might have achieved the same renown—a man of the highest talents, fearless, honourable, a chivalrous soldier *sans peur et sans reproche.*

John Moore was the second son of Dr. Moore of Glasgow, the author of "Zeluco," and was given a commission in the 51st Regiment at the age of sixteen. He was then, according to his proud father, "a pretty youth; his face is of a manly beauty, his person is strong, and his figure elegant. He dances, fences, and rides with uncommon address. His mind begins to expand, and he

shows a great deal of vivacity, tempered with good sense and benevolence. He is of a daring and intrepid temper, and of an obliging disposition . . . everybody is fond of him." He was at this time making the grand tour with his father and the young Duke of Hamilton, and chiefly interested in things military—finding weak spots in foreign fortifications, attending reviews under Frederick the Great, and being drilled in spare moments by a Prussian sergeant.

He learnt his work really at Port Mahon in Minorca, and then served under Clinton in the American war, distinguishing himself greatly in an attack up the river Penobscot. At the peace (1783) Moore was placed on half-pay, but devoted himself to the study of his profession, and entered Parliament through the influence of his friend the Duke of Hamilton, being about three-and-twenty. At last, in 1787, he returned to the active list, and became major, then lieutenant-colonel of his old regiment the 51st, which he brought into high order. He now first showed that faculty of interesting his officers in their work, and he checked the excessive indulgence in wine which was the great blot on every regimental mess of those days. The regiment was soon actively employed under Moore; he was just too late for Toulon, but formed

part of the descent on Corsica to reinstate Paoli. In these operations, during which Corsica was won and lost again, Moore became adjutant-general to the military leader, Sir Charles Stuart. When that general resigned his command sooner than support the overbearing conduct of Sir Gilbert Elliot, who had been appointed Viceroy of Corsica, Moore remained, but was soon at cross purposes with Elliot. Moore was popular in Corsica, the Viceroy very much the reverse; the latter insisted that the former should break off all relations with the people, or expect to be sent home, as he was, presently, in the most peremptory way. He went to England, as it seemed, in disgrace, but it was admitted, even by Sir Gilbert Elliot's friends, that Moore had been harshly treated, and he was given the rank of brigadier-general, with a command in the West Indies under Sir Ralph Abercromby. He was in all the sharp fighting that ended in the capture of St. Lucia, and was then appointed governor of that island.

Moore was soon busy in the work of restoring tranquillity, but he was much hampered by "the shameful ignorance and want of zeal in the principal officers under my command," and his great aim was to carry them with him and improve them. He wanted "proper officers," and "such, I am sure," he

writes Abercromby, "still exist in the British army, though they are not to be found among those who have most money or most political interest." "In order to inspire some activity and zeal, it was necessary to show a great deal." At that time he wrote his father: "I rise at daylight, go to bed at nine, and am during the day in eternal action. I have not time to be ill." He felt confident that the troops might be kept healthy if more attention was paid to them; the greatest cleanliness enforced, regular diet, "an addition to the eating part of the rations instead of rum; sea or river bathing, constant activity and movement." The mere parade of a regiment twice a day pleased the officers, but "leaves the soldier to lounge the whole day in a barrack, which cannot be good, and where from indolence his body becomes enervated and liable to disorder."

Moore did not escape the fatal scourge of the locality, and would have died of yellow fever but for his constitution and the reserve power stored in him by a wise way of living. After this he was invalided home, to serve soon in the south of Ireland when the French invasion was expected, and to be actively employed against the Irish insurgents in 1798. He saved Wexford from the most horrid outrages, and "entered it so opportunely

as to prevent it from being laid in ashes"[1] and its inhabitants massacred. When Abercromby was sent to Holland in 1799, Lord Cornwallis spared Moore, who had been constantly at his side in Dublin, writing: "You shall have all the troops you ask and General Moore, who is a greater loss to me than the troops. But he will be of infinite service to Abercromby; and I likewise think it an object to the State that an officer of his talents and character should have every opportunity of acquiring knowledge and experience in his profession." Abercromby was superseded by the Duke of York, with the deplorable results well known to history. Moore was wounded in the campaign.

His next serious service was in Egypt with Abercromby in 1800–1, whose right hand he was, and of whom he spoke as follows: "Sir Ralph was a truly upright, honourable, and judicious man; his great sagacity, which had been pointed all his life to military matters, made him an excellent officer. The disadvantage he laboured under was being extremely short-sighted. He therefore stood in need of good executive generals under him." Moore was one of the best, and was peculiarly useful in

[1] *London Gazette*, June 26, 1798.

reconnaissance. Hutchinson and Craddock were both senior to Moore, and he had no very leading part in the rest of the operations. Shortly afterwards he returned to England on the death of his father, and was appointed to that command at Shorncliffe which was the cradle of Craufurd's Light Division. The time was approaching when Napoleon in the camp at Boulogne threatened invasion, and people were playing at soldiers everywhere, especially on our southern coasts. The Prince Regent commanded his regiment (the 10th Hussars) at Brighton. Mr. Pitt, as warden of the Cinque Ports, commanded their militia, and was directly under Moore's orders.[1]

Sir William Napier, speaking of those Shorncliffe days, says: "To awaken the faculties of those under him was one of Sir John Moore's qualifications for command. At Shorncliffe camp he devised such improvements in drill, discipline, dress, arms, formations, and movements as would have placed him for military reforms beside the Athenian Iphicrates. . . . His materials were the 43rd, 52nd, and Rifle regiments, and he so fashioned

[1] Mr. Pitt, who constantly rode over from Walmer to Shorncliffe to confer with Moore, asked once what post would be assigned to him and his regiment in case of invasion. "I shall put you on that hill in the rear, where you will make a most formidable show, while I with the soldiers are fighting on the beach."

them that afterwards, as the Light Division under Wellington, they were found to be soldiers unsurpassable, perhaps never equalled. The separate successful careers of the officers strikingly attest the merits of the school; so long a list of notable men could not be presented by three regiments of any service in the world. In it will be found above ninety who attained the grade of field-officer or higher grades, and amongst them four who commanded armies (three being celebrated as conquerors), two adjutants-general of the British army, three military secretaries, sixteen governors of colonies, and two organisers of the Metropolitan and Irish constabularies. Many generals who have commanded districts, one who commanded a foreign army, several persons noted in science and literature or by peculiar missions and organisations, also belong to the roll; and nearly all were of some fame in battle, although unequal in merit and reputation."

After Trafalgar, when Napoleon broke up his camp at Boulogne to win Austerlitz, Moore went as second in command to General Fox, who was to have superseded Stuart in command of the expedition to Sicily; but he was not present at the battle of Maida. Next he went on that extraordinary mission to Sweden, in aid of its king, Gustavus,

who would not suffer the British troops to land unless they were placed under his own command. After a series of the most exasperating yet petty disputes, the mad king of Sweden suddenly made Moore a prisoner, and declared that the British general should not leave Stockholm without his permission. Moore, however, by a stratagem, escaped to Gothenburg, where he found the fleet and the transports, and the wind being favourable, he sailed at once for England, where he was but coldly received by the Government. He indignantly protested to Lord Castlereagh, "Had I been an ensign I could hardly have been treated with less ceremony." He was to go to Portugal, but in a subordinate command, yet he only knew it by inference. He had a right to be treated with more consideration, although he never questioned the right of Ministers to employ whom they pleased. "Had they on this occasion given the command to the youngest general in the army, I should neither have felt nor expressed that the least injury had been done to me."

His soreness was natural, but it did not prevent him from yielding honest admiration for Sir Arthur Wellesley, nor from urging that "the successful young general should continue what he had begun so well." After Vimiero he told Sir

Hew Dalrymple: "I waive all pretensions as senior, for I consider this as his (Wellesley's) expedition. He ought to have the command of whatever is detached. For my part, I wish I could withdraw altogether; but I shall aid as far as I can for the good of the service without interfering with Sir Arthur, and take any part that is allotted to me." Wellesley heartily reciprocated, as we have seen,[1] and most handsomely offered, when recalled to England, to make Moore's peace with the Ministers. Wellesley always acknowledged Moore's fitness for supreme command, which now indeed, after the Convention of Cintra, fell upon him by express orders from England. He was told that Baird had left England with a reinforcement of 10,000, that he was to combine with them, and advancing into Spain, to aid the Spaniards as circumstances might suggest.

What followed cannot be told more clearly, or in finer words, than it has been by Napier:—

"It is well known how the truly great and ill-used Moore was sent into the heart of Spain by incapable Ministers, to find, not armies, nor enthusiasm, nor energetic government, nor military aid, all of which he had been promised; but, in their stead, the greatest military genius of the world

[1] See ante, p. 39.

(Napoleon) before him, with troops so numerous that their cavalry alone doubled his whole force. It is known also with what a mastery of war he extricated himself from that raging storm; with what firmness he conducted his retreat; and how, turning at Corunna, he ended his glorious life amid the fires of victory."

It is not enough with us to deserve success; Moore failed to command it, although he actually brought off his army all but intact. His military reputation suffered. British public opinion visited upon him the faults of the Government, which had ordered the advance into Spain, and was really responsible for the retreat. There were many carping critics in his army, too, who ignorantly condemned his conduct, unable to appreciate his difficulties or realise the risks he ran. These would have had him stand at bay at some point like Astorga, still far from the sea, and try conclusions with his pursuers to escape the sufferings still in store. The advantages victory offered were of course immense, but unless decisive it would not end the pursuit; anything less, indeed, meant annihilation or surrender. Napoleon himself declared that Moore chose the wiser part; for at Astorga the great captain was within striking distance, and had not yet turned his command

over to Soult, for reasons that have never been fully explained. Moore's enemies were kinder to him than his friends, and the French, chivalrous as ever in war, acknowledged his merits by raising a monument to him on the field of Corunna.

THE END

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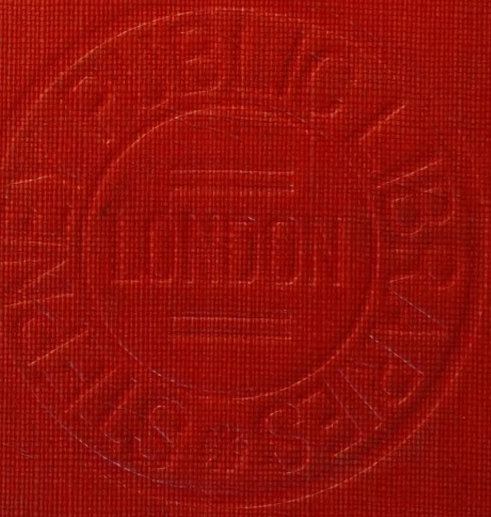
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